Sufi

Muslim Saints of South Asia

The Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries

Anna Suvorova

MUSLIM SAINTS OF SOUTH ASIA

This book studies the veneration practices and rituals of the Muslim saints. It outlines the principle trends of the main Sufi orders in India, the profiles and teachings of the famous and less well-known saints, and the development of pilgrimage to their tombs in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. A detailed discussion of the interaction of the Hindu mystic tradition and Sufism shows the polarity between the rigidity of the orthodox and the flexibility of the popular Islam in South Asia. Treating the cult of saints as a universal and all pervading phenomenon embracing the life of the region in all its aspects, the analysis includes politics, social and family life, interpersonal relations, gender problems and national psyche. The author uses a multidimensional approach to the subject: a historical, religious and literary analysis of sources is combined with an anthropological study of the rites and rituals of the veneration of the shrines and the description of the architecture of the tombs.

Anna Suvorova is Head of Department of Asian Literatures at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. A recognized scholar in the field of Indo-Islamic culture and literature, she frequently lectures at universities all over the world. She is the author of several books in Russian and English including *The Poetics of Urdu Dastaan*; *The Sources of the New Indian Drama*; *The Quest for Theatre: the twentieth century drama in India and Pakistan*; *Nostalgia for Lucknow* and *Masnawi: a study of Urdu romance*. She has also translated several books on pre-modern Urdu prose into Russian.

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IN CHERISHED MEMORY
OF MY FATHER, AND NOW
OF MY MOTHER TOO

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FOREWORD

Christopher Shackle

In many ways the new millennium is indeed a New Age for humanity, a time in which we are all inexorably becoming ever more closely linked with one another. Human nature being what it is, however, the multiplication of increasingly close economic ties and mechanical social connections is a process which too often outruns our capacity to understand and to appreciate the diverse religious and cultural traditions with which we now find ourselves in such immediate contact. To use the fashionable image, the Other against which we once were safely able to define ourselves at such a comfortable distance is now a much more immediate presence. Given the instincts all too successfully instilled by the early evolution of mankind, the instant reaction to this situation is to sense the threat of strangers getting too close rather than to perceive the opportunity of getting to know some different new friends and something of from where they come.

Openness is certainly the basic requirement for this process of mutual understanding to take place, and is sorely needed if we are properly to move together into the new world of global co-existence into which we have all so rapidly been thrust. But understanding requires not just openness but also knowledge, as is nowhere more apparent today than in the lethal fog of misunderstandings too often born of closed minds and ignorance which prevents so many from a proper appreciation of the world of Islam. The events of recent years have shown, as never before, the urgent need for informed and sympathetic accounts of the kind which alone can hope to help open hearts as well as minds.

It is just such a window of understanding which is opened through this book by Professor Anna Suvorova, herself a distinguished Russian scholar of Urdu literature and South Asian Muslim culture. In its original version, it was deservedly very well received in Russia, which has its own clear needs for studies of this kind. It now appears

in a somewhat revised version which should do equally well with English readers. Indeed, it might be said with some justification that it now comes before an audience for which it is even more appropriate, given the historic ties between Britain and South Asia and the huge significance of the South Asian Muslim diasporas in Britain and other Western countries today.

Her subject is one of absolutely major cultural, religious and historical significance. Collectively, the populations of Pakistan and Bangladesh, with their overwhelming Muslim majorities, and the very large Muslim minority of India constitute the largest subgroup of Muslims in the world today. Although divided by the modern national boundaries established in the twentieth century, they share a common heritage going back to the substantive foundations of Islam in the Indian subcontinent from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards.

At the centre of that common patrimony stand the figures of the great Sufi saints, who played so large a role in bringing Islam to South Asia and in crossing the fundamental religious divides of their day in such a way as to appeal also to the Hindu population, and who through the devotion inspired by their poetry and by their tombs have continued to play so large and inspiring a role in the imaginative world of South Asian Islam down to the present day. It is for this reason that, long after the names of so many famous rulers, outstanding poets and learned theologians who flourished in the centuries of Muslim rule in India have been almost completely forgotten, the titles of Sufi masters like Baba Farid Shakarganj or his disciple Nizamuddin Awliya immediately evoke a living presence.

While there is no shortage of material on the great Sufis of early South Asian Islam, much of it is not always very easily accessible even to those who have a good idea of what they are looking for. One of the many things that Anna Suvorova has done so well in this book is to bring together so much that cannot easily be found together elsewhere. The sheer number of saints, from many different centuries and widely different geographical areas, is itself impressive as is the clarity with which each is characterized. In compiling her fascinating account, Suvorova naturally draws particularly on the best twentieth-century scholarship, as exemplified in the work of Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Bruce Lawrence, or the late Annemarie Schimmel, all helpfully listed here in the bibliography for those inspired to take their reading further.

Useful as this bringing together of the work of others is in itself, the book offers much more. As befitting an author whose own

keen literary sensibility is evident from her passing references to a wide range of authors from Thomas Aquinas to Borges, she makes wonderful use of the large body of poetry and prose associated with the great Sufis, whether as the works of their own pen or the productions of their followers. Most of this literature was written in Persian, the Latin of mediaeval South Asia, and has become generally unfamiliar there today. And yet just how vivid it remains at its best can be seen in the numerous passages which are aptly cited from its supreme masterpiece, Amir Hasan's memoir of Nizamuddin Awliya, which he called *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* or *Morals for the Heart*. Readers of the book should be equally appreciative of the several vivid first-hand descriptions of the great shrines which continue to keep the memory of the saints alive today, and which combine a keen artistic eye with sometimes wry but always sympathetic observations on some of the inconveniences and puzzling obstacles which are perhaps inseparable from pilgrimage anywhere.

When all these qualities are allied to Anna Suvorova's clearly passionate belief in the centrality of her subject to a modern humane understanding of South Asian Islam, the result is a wonderful introduction to a wonderful subject. Its message has never been more timely.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all let me admit in all frankness that the idea to write *The Muslim Saints of South Asia* (published in Russian in 1999) was prompted by the works of Professor Christopher Shackle of SOAS, University of London, on provincial Indo-Pakistani Sufism. I read them avidly with a feeling of growing admiration that almost imperceptibly turned into desire to explore the subject from my own viewpoint. At all the stages of the work on this book Professor Shackle generously shared his profound knowledge of Indo-Pakistani Sufi literature with me. Therefore it is a double gratitude that I wish to express to Professor Shackle for the role played by him in the destiny of the book.

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1

THE INDIAN TOMB

Everyone who has had the good fortune of travelling through India and Pakistan has been surprised by the abundance of saints' tombs, which are powerful places of pilgrimage and objects of popular devotion. It sometimes seems that certain regions of the Indian subcontinent – Sind, Punjab, Gujarat, the Deccan – are nothing less than extraordinary sacred necropolises, where someone's venerated tomb is located almost at each and every step of the way. For example, on the hill of Makli near the town of Thatta in Pakistan, according to popular belief, one hundred and twenty-five thousand saints are buried! The eighteenth-century Sindhi historian Mir 'Ali Shir Qani, who has dedicated *The Book of the Hillock Makli* (*Maklīnāma*, 1778) to this place, has written: 'The dust of this hillock is antimony for the eyes of those who have been endowed with insight, and its earth is the seedbed for the grain of the concealed' (Qani 1967: 11).

Another hillock, Shahpura in the Deccan, where many Sufi mentors (*shaikhs* and *sayyids*) were buried in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, is not unlike the hill of Makli in this respect. Similarly, the towns of Punjab Multan and Ucch, where many celebrated mystics have been laid to rest, have become 'lands of bliss', as has the eastern part of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (in former times the territory of the principality of Awadh and Rohilkhand); here as far back as the eleventh century those warriors for faith who became saints in popular perception have found eternal rest.

Muslims were, in the first instance, the social media where the cult of the saints and their tombs developed. The Hindus, who adhere to the practice of cremation and not burial, it seemed, did not have any particular basis for veneration of the saints' tombs. But in the course of many centuries of intercourse and living together these two

major communities have actively influenced each other, and one of the consequences of such an influence has been the accession of the Hindus to the Islamic cult of saints and to the rites of the veneration of their tombs.

Judging by historical sources, everything connected with the relics of the Sufi preceptors, warriors for faith and miracle workers, carried the greatest spiritual authority within the most diverse strata of medieval society, irrespective of social status and religion. Thus, in the year 1747, when the Afghan conqueror Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, a minister of the rulers of the Kalhora dynasty, Diwan Gidumal, himself professing Hinduism, met him and presented him with the most precious treasure of Sind – a bag containing dust from the tombs of the local *awliyā*.[1]

Several graves of Sufi *shaikhs* on the territory of Punjab also became objects of veneration for the community of Sikhs, among them the tomb of Shaikh Fariduddin (also known as Baba Farid) ranks high. Discourses of this Muslim mystic have found a place in *Ādi Granth* – the sacred book of the Sikhs. Among the devotees of the tombs of Muslim saints were not only people of other faiths but also marginal groups: horrifying stranglers – thugs, worshipping the cruel goddess Bhavani; the Mevati tribe, whom the English used to call 'robbers'; transvestites (*hījrā*) and nomadic Gypsies (*banjārā*). In other words, it was not at all obligatory to be a pious Muslim in order to participate in the cult of saints.

Human life in medieval India, as, for that matter, in any society with a traditional type of culture and a retarded type of consciousness, was wholly determined by religious concepts. For a Muslim, in particular, there remained not a single opinion, event or deed in which connection with the Qur'ān, the Sunna of the Prophet and Islam as a whole, could not be perceived. Perception of the external world, the macrocosm, and the inner, spiritual world, the microcosm, was exclusively religious, which generated an intensity of faith in all strata of medieval society. The all-embracing imperative of Islam, in particular the dictates of *Sharī'at*, it seemed, did not leave room for secular, religiously neutral spheres in human activity: from birth to death each step of the true believer had to be correlated with the norms and injunctions of faith.

However, even in such an intensively saturated atmosphere of religious devotion, sincere piety and effective transcendence could not be constant and general. Precisely because exceptional plenitude of religious experience and whole-hearted concentration upon questions of faith was strictly enjoined upon the entire population,

deviation of an individual person or social group from this universal norm is particularly noticeable. Many examples from medieval Indian history and culture give an indication of a horrific lack of conformity to the letter and spirit of Islam: heresy, blasphemy and manifest worldliness are all apparent, in spite of the outward show of other-world oriented and pious intentions. The cause of this lack of conformity is not so much the latent process of secularization of consciousness of the medieval Indian, which the supporters of 'historical progress' concepts try so hard to discover, as the extraordinary heterogeneity, plurality and 'impurity' of the spiritual and cultural landscape of the Indian subcontinent.

The advent of Islam in India and its encounter with the local religions, in the first instance with various doctrines of Hinduism, brought about a sharp increase in the number of religious concepts and images, particularly in the popular Islam of the lower social strata. The intermixing and syncretism, and so the impurity and flexibility of all these latter-day creeds, horrified serious Muslim theologians, generally referred to as orthodox. Here it should be remembered that the Christian concepts of 'orthodoxy', 'heresy', and 'sectarianism' do not convey the essence of Islam as a religion and can be used only conditionally.

In Islam there is neither now nor was there earlier any single theological school generally accepted throughout the Muslim world. It has also lacked an institution that legalizes dogmas, like ecumenical councils in Christianity. Elaboration and interpretation of religious tenets were not within the jurisdiction of caliphs or sultans, state or spiritual institutions. 'Orthodox' opinion was formed by private persons (*'ulamā*), whose authority was based exclusively on their knowledge in the sphere of theology.

Such authorities could be those holding official posts like *muftī*, *qāḍī*, *imām*, *faqīh*, and *mujtahid*, as well as those who were not office-holders, but were nevertheless highly influential philosophers and Sufis. The opinion of such an informal leader and his school, accepted by a Caliph, Sultan or Padishah, became official only over a limited segment of time and space, without being obligatory for the rest of the Muslim world. Hence there is the potential for various interpretations of religious issues, so characteristic of Islam. As far as India is concerned the Sunni Islam of the Hanafi creed (*madhab*) can be considered (but again quite conditionally) 'official' or 'orthodox', or rather normative, since that is the creed which was recognized by most of the rulers and spiritual authorities of the Delhi Sultanate and the empire of the Great Mughals.

Deviation from the Sunnism of those of the Hanafi denomination was, however, by no means characterized as heresy (*zandaqa*). Only those representatives of religious trends and movements posing a threat to the theocratic foundations of the state, such as Isma'ilis and other extremist Shi'a sects, Mahdavis (adherents of the self-proclaimed Messiah Mahdi of Jaunpur), Roshanites (followers of the Afghan mystic Bayazid Ansari) and some radical Sufis (such as the proponent of egalitarianism Shah Inayat of Jhok or Shaikh Sarmad Kashani), were proclaimed as *kāfirs* and enemies of the true faith.

It is not difficult to appreciate that such 'heretics'[2] posed a greater threat to state power than to the authority of religion. Thus, the Isma'ilis, suffering constant persecution on the part of authorities, from time to time stirred up rebellions, or gathered mutinous rabble under their banners. One such action was the rebellion of Carmatians in Delhi under the leadership of Nur-i Turk in 1236. Roshanites made up the main body of armed opposition to the power of the Great Mughals and carried out successful propaganda among the Pashto speaking tribes of the North Eastern Frontier province. Shah Inayat incited Sindhi peasants not to pay taxes and to take land away from the landed gentry, whereas Shaikh Sarmad supported prince Dara Shikoh against his brother Aurangzeb in the struggle for the Mughal throne.

The role of the initiators of Hindu–Muslim cultural dialogue fell to the lot of Sufi preachers and missionaries of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, who, in order to introduce Islam to the broad masses of the urban population and to be understood better, actively made use of the concepts, images and legends of local religions and cultural traditions. In the course of this proselytizing activity a certain correspondence between the teachings of Islam and the doctrines of *advaita vedānta* was established as also between the preaching of Sufis and Hindu mystics like Naths, Sants and Bhaktas.

Consequently, by the fifteenth century in many regions of the subcontinent a unique cultural syncretism had taken shape, which is known as 'mixed', 'composite', 'common' culture or the culture of Hindu–Muslim synthesis. Existence of this culture in North India (the region between the Ganges and the Jamna), in Kashmir, Punjab, Sind, Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan considerably strengthened inter-religious peace and as such was also a source of strength for the social and political unity of such unwieldy imperial formations as the Delhi Sultanate and the empire of the Great Mughals. And although dissemination and protection of true faith was considered to be the duty of Muslim rulers, at a particular stage they supported

an active syncretism of Sufi fraternities, as they gave priority to the political unity of the state over religious 'purity'.

It is obvious that in the peculiar conditions of the empires, sultanates and principalities of medieval India, where Muslim minority ruled over a many times numerically greater non-Muslim majority, any other, more rigorous religious policy would have been simply impossible. Therefore, syncretism in religious and cultural spheres objectively promoted religious peace and socio-political stability. In the present century Indian historians not infrequently see in religious and cultural syncretism the result of conscious inter-confessional collaboration, which is correct only to a certain extent. In the majority of cases this syncretism was a by-product of superficial Islamization, the illegitimate offspring of popular Islam, unconsciously retaining in it a conglomerate of pre-Islamic religious beliefs.

Only in rare instances did syncretism become the policy of the upper social strata and intellectual elite, and it is precisely this syncretism that evokes particularly tender emotion on the part of modern historians. Therefore, the names of such well-known supporters of syncretism as Ibrahim Sharqi, the Sultan of Jaunpur, and Sultan Zainul'abidin of Kashmir, Ibrahim II 'Adil Shah of Bijapur and Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah of Golkonda, Mahmud Begra, the ruler of Gujarat, and the Mughal emperor Akbar started being shown to the best advantage in contrast to the names of those who adhered to a rigid conservative policy in the interests of purity of faith. To the latter – Sultan of Delhi Mubarak Shah Khalji, Ghiyathuddin Tughluq, Muhammad Tughluq and Firoz Shah Tughluq, Sikandar Lodi and the Great Mughal Aurangzeb – fell the thankless roles of fanatic and obscurant.

However, if for the time being we leave aside what historical science today considers to be beneficial and progressive for the Indian society of that distant age and turn to the problem of syncretism, insulated from its socio-political context, as to a purely religious problem, then from this point of view entirely different fragments of the Indian cultural landscape come to light.

Irrespective of what the spiritual content of certain forms of piety was in medieval Indian Islam, much is found therein which could be considered 'wild growth', an uncontrolled but redundant and at times deforming outgrowth of religious life. It applies mainly to the cult of saints, which having crossed over to Indian soil, flourished to full and indeed uncontrolled bloom. It was in the sphere of the veneration of the numerous Sufi *shaikhs*, *sayyids* and *pīrs* that religious syncretism, by its chaotic diversity, posed the greatest threat to pietism and the stringent fulfilment of the injunctions of Islam.

In contrast to Christianity, in Islam there did not exist any official canonization of saints. An actually existing person, a legendary character or folk-lore hero was canonized by force of the general opinion of the faithful, and religious authorities were sooner or later compelled to accept the spontaneously established tradition of veneration, trying to make it conform with the norms of Islam.[3] Such initiatives from the lower strata of society were bound to impart to the veneration of saints features alien to Islam, which provoked theologians to protest.

The innermost stirrings of the heart of a true believer should be directed towards Allah and his Prophet, whereas veneration of saints divided and fragmented this aspiration into a multi-coloured kaleidoscope far removed from Islamic ceremonies, rituals and customs. Permeation of all the spheres of human existence by religion in these conditions led not only to the spirituality of the worldly but also to the profanation and secularization of the spiritual. In the unsophisticated consciousness of ordinary believers, most of them newly converted to Islam, favourite saints were endowed with a certain authenticity. The saints deaths as martyrs and the miracles wrought by them were of the utmost importance in the people's imagination, and recourse to them for help was something more intelligible and usual than faith in one invisible God, devoid of anthropomorphic features.

Veneration of a saint is almost always the veneration of his tomb in which, side-by-side with the buried remains, some material evidence of his temporal life like dress, turban, sandals, staff, weapons and beads are preserved, acquiring the status of relics. Such an attachment to things material was bound to have a certain corporeal influence upon the spiritual sphere, at times leading to quite unexpected extremes.

Popular religion in the lower social strata, with its inherent occultism condemned by Islam, countenanced veneration of corporal remains of saints, which imparted a particular materiality to their images. The most well-known example of veneration of such corporal remains is the numerous cultic memorials in which hair or a footprint of the Prophet or the members of his family were preserved. These memorials were built on the model of tombs, like the famous *dargāhs* of 'the sacred hair' War Mubarak (in Rohri) and Hazrat Bal (in Srinagar), and also memorials of the 'Prophet's footprint' (*qadam Rasūl*)[4] in Nabiganj, Dhakka and Lucknow. In addition the miraculous property of multiplying themselves was ascribed to the Prophet's hair. Ignaz Goldziher, one of the pioneers in the field of

saints' cult in Islam, quotes the words of the Arab traveller Abdul Ghani Nabulusi, who was told by a certain Indian Muslim during *Ḥajj* that

> in India many people are in possession of Prophet's hair: some have a single hair, others – two, and certain others – up to twenty . . . He also reported to me that these hairs sometime move by themselves and that by themselves they get lengthened and multiplied in such a way that from just one hair crops up a great number of new hairs.
>
> (Goldziher 1967–71, 2: 93)[5]

Veneration of relics penetrated even into the public cult of the mosque: thus in Badshahi Masjid in Lahore numerous relics, which supposedly had been brought to India by Babur, were preserved, belonging to the Prophet, Caliph 'Ali, members of his household and also to the great saint of Baghdad, eponym of the Qadiriyya fraternity, 'Abdul Qadir Jilani. After the fall of the Mughal dynasty they fell into the hands of Sikh rulers and then of the English, and it was they who handed them over to the mosque. Generally speaking, India had the reputation of being a peculiar market for relics, mostly of spurious ones. In 1873 a shirt of the Prophet, adorned with verses from the Qur'ān, was presented to the Viceroy of India. It turned out that it was bought by a certain English General for ten thousand rupees in the bazaar at Calcutta.

Wherever the question is that of a relic, medieval consciousness stops neither at desecration nor at most ordinary crime. A cruel example is to be found in the Census of India of 1911 which reveals that the Afridi Pathans of Tirah did not have a single tomb of a saint on their land which could be venerated. Suffering from a collective inferiority complex

> Afridis induced by generous offers a saint of the most notorious piety to take up his abode among them. Then they made quite sure of his staying with them by cutting his throat; they buried him honourably; they built over his bones a splendid shrine at which they might worship him and implore his aid and intercession on their behalf.
>
> (Schimmel 1980: 127)

J. Huizinga cites quite similar examples from the medieval history of Europe: in the eleventh century Italian peasants wanted to kill St

Romuald in order to take possession of his remains, and after St Thomas Aquinas' death monks prepared his body (for experimental purposes) fearing to lose the invaluable relic (Huizinga 1995: 168).

Subsequent formalization of the cult of saints resulted in a transition from relics to amulets, which were considered to be a means to ward off evil, or a medicine for effecting a cure, as well as being a depository of the miraculous occult power of the saint. From the fourteenth century onwards preparation of amulets (*ta'wīdh*), each a kind of individual memorial, became the main occupation of the dervishes and attendants of tombs. The amulet contained a small piece of stone from the saint's tomb, a chip from the canopy over the *mazār* or a shred from the *chaddar* used as its cover and finally simply a piece of paper with a prayer or a verse from the Qur'ān written on it. As with everything else in the world of saints, amulets also had their specialization: some were meant to ward off the effect of evil eye and black magic, some to cure diseases of the body and others would ensure success in life and so on. Selling of *ta'wīdh* was an important source of income for the attendants of *dargāhs*.

In religions far removed from the iconoclasm of Islam and founded to a large extent on the veneration of images it is difficult to discover a qualitative difference between the degree of sacredness of one or other sacred image. All the images in a church, in a Hindu or Buddhist temple are real in equal degree and evoke the reverential trepidation of the believer. An icon, a fresco or a statue by themselves do not teach that God (or gods) should be worshipped and the saints should only be venerated; in order to appreciate the difference one has to have recourse to the authority of the scripture or the canon, the clergy or the priests. In the system of concepts of Islam, which rejects all sorts of images of sacred objects as idolatry, saints have been assigned a place at the periphery of religious life.

Saint (in Arabic *wālī*, pl. *awliyā*) is understood in *ḥadīths* (Prophet's traditions) as one close to, a friend of or even loved by God. According to early Arab Sufis (Junaid in particular) saints are people who have attained perfection in religious practice as well as in the knowledge of God; they are privy to the concealed, and contemplation of the Truth (*mushāhadat al-ḥaqq*) is accessible to them (*Islam* 1991: 45). Many Muslim theologians, including one of the first theoreticians of Sufism in India, al-Hujwiri (buried in Lahore in the eleventh century, and later acknowledged as a saint under the name of Data Ganjbakhsh), have discussed the question of correlation between sainthood (w*ilāyat*) and prophethood (*nubuwwat*) and have categorically rejected the idea of superiority of saints over prophets.

Probably the most outstanding Iranian Sufi of the ninth century, at-Tirmidhi was one of the first who theoretically substantiated the concepts of sainthood in his treatise *Seal of the Saints* (*Khatm al-awliyā*). He, in particular, asserted that 'prophets were saints of God before they became prophets. That is why they possess both qualities: prophethood as well as sainthood. They have no equals' (al-Geyoushi 1971: 33).

At-Tirmidhi's ideas about correlation between 'prophethood' and 'sainthood' and about the hierarchy of saints were developed further in the works of the great Sufi shaikh Ibn al-'Arabi, who affirmed that sainthood is a particular manifestation of prophethood: a saint does not compulsorily carry out a prophetic mission, whereas each and every prophet invariably happens to be a saint. Ibn al-'Arabi differentiated between two types of sainthood – one common to all religions, the other a particular type, Muhammad's sainthood, inherent only in Islam. He considered Jesus to be the 'Seal' of the first and the Supreme Sufi *Quṭb* to be the 'Seal' of the second type of sainthood. 'Be aware that sainthood is an all-embracing sphere, and therefore it is not discontinued; its task is general proclamation. But prophethood is legislative and law-giving and so it is discontinued' (Ibn 'Arabi 1980: 214).

Beginning from the tenth century the concept of an invisible hierarchy of saints takes shape in Sufism. At the head of the hierarchy is the supreme saint – *Quṭb* (literally 'pole' or 'pivot'), also called 'helper' (*Ghawth*); he is followed by an ever-increasing number of 'fulcrums' (*Awtād*), 'the chosen ones' (*Akhyār*), 'substitutes' (*Abdāl*), 'the dutiful ones' (*Abrār*), 'chiefs' (*Nuqabā'*), 'pre-eminent ones' (*Nujabā'*), 'couriers' (*Shuṭṭār*), 'the troops' (*Afrād*) etc. Al-Hujwiri has written in his celebrated work *The Unveiling of the Veiled* (*Kashf al-maḥjūb*) about this 'pyramid' of saints:

> Among them there are four thousand who are concealed and do not know one another and are not aware of the excellence of their state, but in all circumstances are hidden from themselves and from mankind . . . But of those who have power to loose and to bind and are officers of the Divine court there are three hundred, called *Akhyār*, and forty, called *Abdāl*, and seven, called *Abrār*, and four, called *Awtād*, and three, called *Nuqabā'*, and one, called *Quṭb* or *Ghawth*. All these know one another and cannot act save by mutual consent.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 213–14)

The well-known philosopher and Sufi, the tragic hero of Indian history of the seventeenth century, Dara Shikoh wrote in the treatise *The Notebook of The Saints* (*Safīnāt al-awliyā*) that with the death of one *walī* the entire hierarchy of *awliyā* is set in motion and the place of the deceased is taken by the subordinate *walī*, who, in his turn, is replaced by a *walī* of still lower rank and this is how the entire pyramid is reconstructed (Dara Shikoh 1965: 58).

Each member of the hierarchy played a particular role: *quṭb*, as apparent even from his title 'pole/pivot', governed the entire universe; 'fulcrums' supported and held in equilibrium the cardinal points, i.e. the four directions of the world; 'deputies' were responsible for the seven climatic zones of the world and 'leaders' concerned themselves with people's worries and problems, etc. Ibn al-'Arabi indicated that the higher members of the hierarchy possessed aggregate knowledge, which was distributed among the saints of lower ranks. The entire knowledge of the universe is concentrated in *quṭb* and he is himself a perfect Gnostic (*'ārif*). This hierarchy evidently reflected the complicated structure of Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*), where with the increase in the number of members *shaikh* was compelled to accomplish training of the disciples and exercise control over the fraternity through numerous deputies (*khalīfa*).

Already by the fourteenth century most of the towns in North India had their own saint, upon whom the right to preach independently was conferred by the supreme *shaikh* of the fraternity or by his deputy, who, in their turn, traced their spiritual genealogy (*silsila*) to the eponym of one of the Sufi orders. Generally speaking, it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between the orders and the cult of saints proper, since *awliyā* were part of the order itself during their life-time, and after their death formed part of its *isnād*, the chain of persons transmitting the mystic tradition and bliss.

In the popular Islam of the lower strata of society saints were venerated in the first instance not as Gnostics but as miracle workers, bearers of divine bliss (*baraka*), intercessors and patrons of various social groups and castes of artisans. By virtue of their closeness to the people, voluntary penury and their ascetic mode of life, *awliyā* often carried greater authority than the 'official' experts of religion, and therefore the authorities tried in every way possible to enlist their support. Thus in the thirteenth century the Sultan of Delhi, Iltutmish, tried in vain to appoint a Sufi master, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, whom after his demise people started venerating as a saint, to the important post of *Shaikh ul-Islām*[6] in his court, where he would have been required to supervise the state's spiritual matters. A century later

another saint of Delhi, Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, was compelled to accept this post in the court of Muhammad Tughluq in order to save inhabitants of the Sultan's capital from forced migration to the Deccan.

However, in the majority of cases saints did not aspire for collaboration with temporal power, and at times their relations turned out to be quite inimical, as can be seen in the biographies of five great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya brotherhood: Mu'inuddin Sijzi, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar (Baba Farid), Nizamuddin Awliya and Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli. Typical is the reaction of Nizamuddin Awliya to Sultan 'Ala'uddin Khalji's decision to visit his *khānqāh*: 'In my house there are two doors, and if Sultan enters through one of them, I will get out through the other one. We dervishes have nothing to do with matters of state' (Nizami 1948: 389).

Notwithstanding the fact that popular religion was moved by saints' virtues and glorious deeds (*manāqib*), one should not exaggerate ethical factors in the cult of *awliyā*. A South Asian saint is more often irate, rancorous and capricious than kind and charitable. In saint Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli's words, 'moral precepts (*akhlāq*) give knowledge of the goal, but leave a person in ignorance as to the means of its achievement' (Nizami 1953: 76).

Wilāyat is a religious rather than an ethical concept. This virtue is granted, happens to be innate or is transmitted through *silsila al-baraka* (chain of benediction), and, therefore, it does not depend much on personal moral attributes. Lives of saints show that they stand above generally accepted moral norms and do not stop at what religious or common law considers a crime, in particular, at taking the life of many a guiltless person for the edification of sinners. Among the saints were also some who were called *malāmatī* ('those who seek blame') and who were least bothered about observance of moral precepts.

Popularization of the cult of saints was facilitated by the belief that *baraka*, divine bliss, did not just abide in a saint; it could travel from him to ordinary people. *Baraka* did not disappear after a saint's death, but in a reinforced form continued to emanate from his tomb, from things belonging to him and even from his name. The word *baraka* is to be found even in the Qur'ān, where its source happens to be Allah, distinguishing the prophets with His blessing and bliss. The Qu'rānic concepts of bliss were reinterpreted and developed by Muslim theologians into the theory of emanation of *baraka* to the prophets, who were the recipients of divine revelation, and to the saints, favoured with divine inspiration (*ilhām*). In Shi'a theology,

bliss in the first instance is vested in *sayyids*, the descendants of the Prophet. Going by the concepts of ceremonial rites *baraka* could be attained by each Muslim at the time of *Ḥajj*, i.e. pilgrimage to Mecca, by touching the sacred 'black stone'. Popular beliefs, connected with *baraka*, constituted an important part of people's religious beliefs, and were bound up with various occult activities, basically with curative magic and protection from the evil eye.

In the late Indian medieval period the idea that the only role of a saint is intercession before Allah and, consequently, that of only a link in the chain of healing, was forgotten. The function of healing was delegated in its entirety to the saints, while individuality and corporeality of the images of *awliyā* brought about the situation that each of them specialized in the healing of some particular disease: thus saint Makhdum Faqih, buried not far away from Bombay, cured hysteria; Pir Bukhari, laid to eternal rest in Quetta, healed venereal diseases; Shah Sufaid from the banks of the Jhelum specialized in the cure of coughs; and Ghazi Miyan of Bahraich cured leprosy. Shah Madar, whose tomb was in Makanpur, gave relief in cases of snake-bite while the help of the eminent saint of Ucch, Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht, was sought in cases of haemorrhoids.

When the matter concerned a disease or the ill-effects of witchcraft the saint's name was pre-eminent. In fact, the disease itself was considered to be incurred by the wrath of the saint: for example, female hysteria was everywhere considered to be a punishment meted out by Shaikh Saddu, an exclusively women's saint venerated in Bengal and North India. At the same time it was he who protected a woman from the cruelty of her husband and from the eternal carping of his relatives. Shah Madar cured people of the venom of a snake but could also send a host of snakes upon a person incurring his displeasure. The Punjabi saint Shah Daula, buried in Gujrat, used to punish people for disobedience by sending upon them in retribution 'rat-headed' children, i.e. microcephalics. Such 'baby rats of Shah Daula' were ministers of the cult of this saint. There is enough evidence of the fact that in the circle of superstitious and ignorant common people saints were considered to be the source of diseases and magic importance was attached to their names. Exclamations 'In the name of Shaikh Saddu!' and 'Long live Madar!' simultaneously happen to be ritual formulas and invocations, but also as a widely used damnation, like the curse 'Que Saint Antoine me arde' (Let St Anthony burn me down) in medieval France. By the way, the old name of gangrene 'St Anthony's fire' also has its origin in the name of this saint. The old name of epilepsy 'St Vitus' dance' also gives an

indication of the connection of the disease with the name of a particular saint. In this way was transference of faith brought about from the sphere of the religio-ethical to that of the occult, and there arose a perceptible danger of the degeneration of the cult of saints into pagan superstition and occultism.

No less typical for Indian popular Islam of the lower strata is the tendency to connect one or other commercial and vocational group or caste with a particular saint. The monotheism of Islam did not completely do away with specialization in the sphere of the supernatural going back to polytheistic traditions. Indicative of this is the veneration of patrons of various occupations and social groups. In spite of the egalitarian tendencies of Islam in the social sphere, Indian Muslims generally created their own hierarchy of vocational groups, parallel to the system of Hindu castes (*jātī*). Thus, in various regions of the country every such group had its own patron saint.

So it was that after his death the *shaikh* of the Suhrawardiyya fraternity Baha'uddin Zakariya Multani became the patron of the boatmen and fishermen of Punjab; meanwhile, the fishermen and boatmen of Bengal sought help from the warrior saint Shah Jalal. Pir Badr helped sailors, and Shah Madar helped palanquin-bearers. The protector of the oil manufacturers (*telī*) of Lahore was their 'colleague' Hasan Teli, whereas ironsmiths (*lohār*) had Shah Musa Lohar as their patron. Even the marginal sections of the society like thieves, prostitutes, transvestites (*hījrā*), thugs, etc. had their own saints, patrons and helpers.

The ability to accomplish supernatural deeds (*karāmāt*) was ascribed to the saints. As distinct from *mu'jiza*, the miracle that a prophet publicly accomplishes in confirmation of his mission, *karāmāt* had an emphatically passive nature.[7] It was believed that *awliyā* acquire the capability to work miracles because of their piety and ascetic mode of life. At-Tirmidhi, whom we have already referred to above, has written:

> It is possible for saints to work miracles. The occurrence of miracles inspires in others the belief in the genuineness of the sainthood. When a miracle becomes manifest it is a sign of true sainthood. The miracle is both the proof of this genuineness and its result, for it is the saint's genuineness that enables him to work miracles.
>
> (al-Geyoushi 1971: 33)

The entire medieval hagiographic literature and collections of discourses of the saints (*malfuẓāt)*, compiled by their disciples, are

full of descriptions of miracles accomplished by mystics, itinerant dervishes and hermits. These miracles include levitating, walking on water, invoking elemental phenomena (rain, drought, earthquake, etc.), traversing vast distances in a moment, friendship with wild beasts, clairvoyance, and thought-reading at a distance. Sufi hagiographers have combined all these miracles in twelve categories, among which resurrection of the dead (*iḥyā al-mawāt*) was of the utmost importance.

Some miracle-workers gained eternal fame just by a single extravagant deed. For example, Makhdum Nuh, whose tomb happens to be in Hala (Sind), achieved sainthood for shifting Shah Jahan's famous mosque in Thatta by force of his prayer. Tradition says that the *miḥrāb* of the mosque, which should be orientated by *qibla*, in the direction of Ka'ba was incorrectly planned by the builders. In despair the builders appealed to the miracle-worker and the next morning the mosque had turned towards Mecca.

If in this episode from the saint's life echoes of historical anachronism are perceptible (the *miḥrāb* of the mosque in Thatta was actually rebuilt, although a century after Makhdum Nuh's death) then the miracle, ascribed to saint Mangho Pir of Sindh, strikes one by its eccentricity. This saint in the thirteenth century supposedly inadvertently brought crocodiles from Arabia to the subcontinent, which he shaped into head lice.[8] In the desert hamlet, situated to the north of Karachi and now bearing his name, Mangho Pir had dug out in the earth two sulphur springs, into which he had let loose the crocodiles, whose offspring became the objects of this saint's cult. No wonder that linkage with sulphur springs has made Mangho Pir a saint celebrated as a healer of rheumatism, skin diseases and leprosy.

Many aetiologic legends about the origin of reservoirs, rivers, mountains and even the climate of South Asia are connected with saints. Thus, for example, springtime in Multan is notorious for its exceptionally oppressive heat, which is also reflected in the Persian saying:

Chār chīz ast tŏḥfa-i Multān
Gard-o garmā, gadā-o goristān.
Four things are the gift of Multan:
Heat, dust, beggars and graveyards.

The origin of this heat is explained by the curse of saint Shams Tabrizi, who passed away in this town in the year (approximately)

1276.[9] Hagiographic tradition says that a compassionate butcher had given a piece of mutton to the wandering saint for sustenance. However, none of the inhabitants of Multan was willing to help the saint and fry the meat on his hearth; blacksmiths, in whose smithies fire never stop burning, proved to be particularly callous. Breaking down from hunger, Shams Tabrizi collapsed in the dust on the wayside, and Allah, taking pity on him, made the sun descend from the heavens so low, that terribly intense heat browned the meat. And this miracle is repeated every spring for the edification of the inhabitants of Multan. During the ʻ*urs* of the saint they cook and give out to beggars pieces of fried mutton, give honour to butchers and cast stones at blacksmiths in the streets.

Existence of springs and oases in deserts and arid regions is also usually traced to the miracle of a saint who had in former times struck earth or rock with his staff and had thereby called forth a stream of water. In particular Punjabis believe that the water that saint Saidan Shah Shirazi brought out from the earth flows from the very Ganges. The appearance of freshwater springs in the region of contemporary Karachi is ascribed to saint Shah Abdullah Ghazi, who extracted water by a stroke of his staff against the rock on which his *dargāh* is now situated.

Quite a number of Indian and Pakistani toponyms are derived from names of well-known saints; others actually contain the word *pīr*, which has become a synonym for saint: mountain ridge Pir Panjal, mountain pass Haji Pir, hills Pir Wadhai and Pir Ghali, settlements Pir Patho and Pir Sohawa, for example.

Although in people's consciousness a miracle constituted the most important event in the biography of a saint, moderate or, as they were called, 'sober' mystics regarded *karāmāt* with utmost caution. In their opinion, a miracle was not an indication of the spiritual perfection of a saint, since it could distract him from pious devotion to God and be a certain temptation and enticement. 'Miracles are men's menses' declared the thirteenth-century Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagori, reflecting the practice whereby a husband avoids his wife during her menstrual days, so similarly God also avoids union with a mystic working miracles. Generally speaking, public opinion denounced public performance of miracles, which was nothing but usurpation of the Prophet's rights, and a dervish turning a rope into a snake or water into milk before the eyes of a bazaar crowd evoked equal disdain on the part of official representatives of religion, mystics as well as pious laymen. Most often members of small marginal fraternities (Madariyya, Jalaliyya, Hydariyya, for example), whose dubious,

verging on dishonest, activities were persecuted by the authorities, earned their living by this kind of 'miracle'.

Karāmāt was required to be performed in secret. Therefore, many hagiographic subjects have a particular feature: a miracle ceases the moment people in the vicinity come to know of it. Thus, for example, the previously mentioned saint of Delhi, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar, nicknamed Kaki (from the Persian *kāk* – 'stale bread'), got his nickname thanks to a miracle connected with this word. Like the majority of the *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya order, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar lived in voluntary penury and could not provide for his large family. Stale bread, only God knows where from, appeared under the saint's prayer rug every day, and constituted all the sustenance of his household. When the saint's talkative wife spread this news among the neighbours, the 'miracle' immediately ceased.

It is paradoxical, but a living saint, performing *karāmāt*, was as a rule supposed to be inferior in significance to a dead saint, because in India, as also in contemporary Pakistan and Bangladesh, the main object of veneration and even worship was and remains the saint's tomb – *mazār*, *dargāh* or *maqbara*. In fact the cult of saints in the countries of South Asia is the cult of their tombs. The actual and metaphorical role of the saint's tomb, in the course of so many centuries serving the ritual, cultural, social and even economical purposes of a vast social environment, is extremely important. The spiritual content of the concepts surrounding the Muslim tomb, it seems, did not leave even the crusaders indifferent: some contemporary scholars trace the origin of such a sacramental concept as *macabre* (as in *la danse macabre*, or dance of death), without which the Christian image of death is not possible, to the word *maqbara* (Huizinga 1995: 212).

According to the precepts of Islam a grave should not serve as a place for prayers, therefore various religious authorities disapproved of adorning saints' tombs with monumental structures crowned with domes: by resembling mosques because of their architecture and décor, such tombs were fraught with the danger of being turned into prayer houses. There are quite a number of hagiographic legends of how, out of humility, exceedingly pious saints themselves dismantled their splendid tombs: thus the domes of the mausoleums of Ahmad ibn-Hanbal in Baghdad, Baha'uddin Naqshband in Bukhara, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan fell to the ground supposedly on their own.

By the end of its existence the Delhi Sultanate *mazār* (literally 'a place which is visited') had grown from a modest structure of cubic

form with a dome into a prayer and ritual complex (*dargāh*), where side by side with the tomb proper there used to be a small mosque with minaret, living accommodation for the *pīr* ('old man'), or the 'successor of a *pīr*' the *sajjādanishīn* (literally 'one sitting on his prayer rug'), cells for dervishes (*ḥujra*), halls for gatherings (*majālis*), for hearing music (*samā*')[10] and for celebration of the saint's birthday (*maulūd*) and day of demise (*'urs*), a guest house for pilgrims and also a public kitchen, where any visitor or beggar could get food free of charge. Some of these premises were separate buildings, but most of them were located in a covered gallery or arcade (*riwāq*), bordering the spacious courtyard of the *dargāh*. Apart from the main sacred place, the tomb of the saint, comparatively modest mausoleums of his deputies (*khalīfa*), the graves of disciples (*murīds*) and of close male relatives were also located on the territory of the *dargāh*.

The structure of a *dargāh* in many respects bears a resemblance both to the structure of the cloisters of the Sufis (*khānqāh*, *jamā'at-khāna*, *zāwiya*) in various lands of Islam and the Hindu shelter for pilgrims, the *dharmaśālā*, and even to the Sikh temple, *gurdwārā*, which gives the communal refectory, or *langar* its name. The idea which had taken root over the centuries about the omnipotence of saints not only in spiritual but also in temporal matters led to their identification with temporal sovereigns, hence the commonly used prefix of the title *Shāh* to the name or nickname of saints and the other name of *dargāh* – *darbār* – also signifying a ruler's court or hall for receptions.

The central ritual act of the cult of saints was pilgrimage to their tombs, *ziyārat* (literally 'visit'),[11] the practice of which took shape in Islam quite late. This ritual, substantially at variance with the spirit of early Islam, came into being under the manifest influence of local religious beliefs in the countries conquered by Arabs. It is from this that the basic features of *ziyārat* take their origin: the succession of the places of devotion, when one and the same place in the course of centuries is visited for religious purpose by pilgrims of various faiths, and great diversity of rites, substantially varying from one Muslim country to the other. In short, fusing of *ziyārat* with pre-Islamic or non-Islamic forms of pilgrimage brought about the phenomenon of the rise of 'inter-religious shrines'.

The practice of pilgrimage was in existence in India long before the advent of Islam; thus various sacred objects, visited by pilgrims, are mentioned even in the *Mahābhāratā* and *Purāṇas*. This practice bears little resemblance to Muslim *ziyārat*; it comprises ablution and libation in sacred rivers and reservoirs, circumambulation of sacred objects from left to right (*pradakshiṇya*), memorial offerings to forefathers

and other rites. Under the category of sacred places, *tirtha* ('river crossing', 'ford'), came reservoirs but also temples, mountains, caves, stones, forests and even entire sacred towns. Numerous gatherings of pilgrims were accompanied by regular fairs (*melā*) and popular festivals, of which the most well-known is *Kumbhkāmelā*, held once in twelve years in each of the four towns: Hardwar, Prayag, Nasik and Ujjain, on which, according to Hindu tradition, god Indra's son Jayanta had sprinkled drops of the nectar of immortality *amṛita*.

With such an abundance of sacred objects and places of pilgrimage their Islamization took place easily, extensively, but to a great extent superficially. Often from the ruins of a temple, even from its architectural components, a mosque was built; at the place where once upon a time there had been the cell of a Hindu hermit, a Sufi *shaikh* erected a *khānqāh*; alongside a sacred reservoir a *dargāh* sprang up, but no single object of veneration could do away with or expunge the old sacred object from collective memory. Nowadays, in an age of aggravated inter-religious relations, such a fusion of the objects of pilgrimage time and again has led to serious communal clashes, a recent example being the bitter conflict around Babri Masjid, Babur's mosque in Ayodhya, located supposedly at the *Rāmajanamsthān*, i.e. the birth-place of the god and epic hero Rama.

Many such 'cultural strata', where the practice of *ziyārat* was superimposed on pre-Islamic layers, have survived in the north-western regions of the subcontinent. Thus, for example, the well-known *dargāh* of saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar was built on the ruins of a Shiva temple and the cavernous cell and *dargāh* of saint Bari Imam in Nurpur (contemporary Islamabad) have sprung up at the place of a Buddhist monastery of the Gandhara period. The *dargāh* of saint Ghazi Miyan in Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) was erected near a sacred reservoir, on the ruins of a sun god temple.

One should not think that *ziyārat* was typical exclusively for South Asian Muslims. Already in the course of the first centuries of the development of Islam, visiting the grave of Prophet Mohammed in Madina and pilgrimages to the tomb of caliph 'Ali in Najaf and that of Imam Husain in Karbala had become customary for the faithful. Tombs of celebrated mystics, the mausoleum of 'Abdul Qadir Jilani in Baghdad, the *mazār* of Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya, the tomb of Baha'uddin Naqshband in Bukhara and the grave of Ahmad al-Badavi in Tanta, had gained the prestige of sacred places. The pious result of such *ziyārat* was sometimes equated with the rite of '*umra*, or small pilgrimage to Mecca.

Some of the saints (in particular, the famous mystic of the Deccan, Muhammad Gesudaraz) had during their lifetime declared to their followers that a visit to their tombs could substitute for a pilgrimage to Mecca at those times when performance of *Ḥajj* was hampered by some serious circumstance. To a certain extent, conferring high spiritual status to the saints' tombs was brought about for practical and often quite prosaic reasons: in addition to the problem of living in a distant part of the Muslim world, the rite of *Ḥajj* was also inaccessible to the poor. The '*ulamā* consistently opposed the participation of the poor in *Ḥajj*, as, setting out on the long journey 'at the will of Allah', they lived by begging throughout the journey to Mecca. This is exactly why authorities, both temporal and religious, did not consider it necessary to resist the establishment of an institution which at least compensated for the inability of a greater part of the population to perform the most important rite of Islam.

At the same time it was precisely in India with its ancient institution of pilgrimage that the practice of *ziyārat* gave rise to the 'wild growth' that I mentioned earlier. In the atmosphere of sanctity surrounding each and every inch of the land the institution of pilgrimage grew with frightening speed and acted like a mechanism: crowds of pilgrims throughout the year migrated from one tomb to another, since the *maulūd* or '*urs* of one or another of an innumerable multitude of saints fell on each day of the calendar. Certain social groups, in particular the indigent from towns and cities, often turned into professional pilgrims, spending the greater part of their life in *ziyārat*. And it is of no wonder, because life in the premises of a *dargāh* guaranteed shelter, food, medical aid and generous alms (*sadaqa*) to a poor man for some period of time.

Ziyārat could be both individual and collective.[12] Recourse was taken to the latter in order to get rid of natural calamities and epidemics. In hagiographic literature, among the descriptions of other virtues of a saint one quite often comes across the expression: 'people pray at his grave for rain'. Quoting Nizamuddin Awliya, his disciple and biographer Amir Khurd recounts details about a collective pilgrimage by the people of Delhi to the tomb of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki during a plague epidemic. In a comparatively later period social cataclysms also became a cause of mass *ziyārat*: thus, during the uprising of 1857–59 when Awadh became one of centres of anti-British struggle, sepoys prayed for victory at the grave of Ghazi Miyan, the warrior for faith (*Gazetteer of Oudh* 1985: 234).

The excessiveness of the cult of saints threatened to eradicate the distance between the temporal and the spiritual. The sacred was

constantly lost in the profane because of an inevitable mixing-up of ritual with everyday life. Profanation increased in the practice of pilgrimage: thus, memorial services for saints during their ‘*urs* were marked by tumultuous fairs and were accompanied by unrestrained public revelry, performances by vagrant buffoons and songstresses of easy virtue, wrestling bouts and cockfights. It was understandable that the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, Firoz Shah Tugluq or Sikandar Lodi, zealous for a purity of faith, endeavoured to bring *ziyārat* under control and, in particular, prohibit female Muslims from attending ‘*urs*.

However, their pious efforts were in vain, because with the passage of time the institution of pilgrimage only gained in strength. This was facilitated not only by purely religious factors (a cessation of the policy of forced Islamization, the relaxation of ideological control on the part of the state, the attractiveness of conversion to Islam for the indigent strata of the urban population and the resultant sharp growth of the Muslim community), but also by socio-political changes, in particular, the unification of the country under the powerful authority of the Great Mughals. Unification brought with it improvements in the means of communication between various regions of the country and relative safety of movement for pilgrims which further enhanced the opportunities for pilgrimage. Already during Akbar’s reign, in the second half of the sixteenth century, such eminent representatives of the Muslim community as historian Bada’uni and theologian Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi declared that the cult of saints had lost touch with the fundamentals of Islam, had gone out of control and had become a threat to the ideological unity of Indian Muslims.

Of course, in the numerous examples of the fusion of the sacred and the profane and the gradual secularization of faith, the naive lack of fastidiousness and ignorant enthusiasm of superficially converted neophytes can be discerned in the cult of saints, the new faith, rather then intentional blasphemy and a lack of piety. Only a society wholly imbued with religious spirit and perceiving faith as something which goes without saying, is capable of such excesses. At the same time the very people who were unconsciously accustomed to the ‘barren symbolism’ of degenerative and emasculated rituals were endowed with receptivity of a high order for the most subtle expressions of spiritual feeling and instantly became inflamed by the preaching of a vagrant *qalandar* or the obscure rhetoric of an ecstatic *majdhūb*.

J. Burckhardt in his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* accurately formulated this peculiarity of the development of popular, but at the same time superficial, piety:

> A powerful religion reveals itself, penetrating in all the circumstances of life, and imbues each and every impulse of the spirit, each and every element of culture. Of course, in due course these very circumstances in their turn have their repercussions on the religion, and its very core can then be stifled by the succession of ideas and images, which once upon a time it had inducted in its sphere. 'Consecration of all relationships of life' has its fatal side.
>
> (Burckhardt 1969: 99)

Since the cult of saints was precisely such a 'consecration of all relationships of life' its destabilizing effect on the 'core' of Islam was going to be inevitable.

It is obvious that veneration of saints created a certain borderland of faith – comfortable, less burdensome and, above all, easy of access to one and all – somewhere in between the many strict and imposing restrictions imperative of the *Sharī'at* and the transcendental and abstruse revelations of the Sufis. One could say that the cult of saints was a reaction to the intellectual philosophy of mysticism as well as to the formal rationalism of Islam, manifesting itself in law and systematized theology. The cult of saints coalesced to such an extent with the everyday and economic activities of ordinary Muslims, and responded to their fundamental requirements, that with all its fantastic nature and orientation towards miracle, it objectively introduced a sobering and materialistic note into the spiritual labyrinth of the Indian medieval period.

The cult of saints in general and pilgrimage in particular rarely had the sacrament of obtaining bliss and transcendent communion with the saint (*murāqaba*)[13] as their goal. The purpose of *ziyārat* became quite utilitarian and temporal: getting cured of a disease, getting rid of bewitchment by the evil eye, giving birth to a son, marrying off a daughter, winning a protracted lawsuit, or mending one's financial position, for example. The diversity of the pilgrims' individual wishes and aims extraordinarily widened the spectrum of rites, the *sacramentalia*, because in accordance with the laws of occult thinking each request by a pilgrim called for special, strictly defined rites and ritual action on his part with respect to a specific saint.

Theoretically *ziyārat* envisaged the following activities: ritual circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of the tomb, touching the threshold, lattice or fence of the *mazār*, sweeping its floor with a special brush, recitation from the Qur'ān, in the first instance, of *Fātiḥa*, adornment of

the *mazār* with flowers and coloured shreds and distribution of alms. However, in India, with the influence of local cults, superstitions and rites, the 'price-list' of services, rendered by the pilgrim to the saint, had considerably expanded.

Often these rites and rituals were of an occult nature, running counter to Islam, and in them connection with the pagan beliefs of popular Hinduism of the lower strata was perceptible. In particular the cult of saints had borrowed from the practice of Hinduism specific offering of fruits, sweets and rice, part of which after prayers and invocations was returned to the faithful in the form of consecrated food and was distributed among the pilgrims (a version of Indian *prasād*).[14] Sometimes such a distribution had quite an extravagant form: thus during the '*urs* of saint Qadirwali Sahib in Tanjore the attendants of his tomb smashed earthen pots with sweetened rice (*k'hīr*) on the ground and pilgrims, seeking to get hold of a morsel, crawled in the dust.

It is partly due to the influence of Hindu *tirtha* that the veneration of reservoirs has become a part of the cult of saints. Thus, in the ponds, dedicated to the already referred to Mangho Pir and the Persian mystic Bayazid Bistami (Chittagong), 'sacred' crocodiles and tortoises are to be found. Kids are offered in sacrifice to the former even up to the present time, which bears an obvious resemblance to *Durgāpūjā*, and until the offering is eaten up, the wish of the pilgrim is not granted. Till recently pilgrims performing ritual ablutions in a pond with crocodiles were subjected to real ordeals. Bathing in a reservoir together with gigantic centenarian tortoises (it was considered that vicious *jinns* were turned into these tortoises by the saint) the faithful supposedly acquired their longevity. There even existed a definite connection between the saint and natural sources of water: tombs of Mangho Pir, Pir Ghaib (Baluchistan) and Shah Saddar (Lakhi, Sindh) are situated between two sulphur springs.

The influence of Hindu rituals has imparted an unusual element in Islamic rites, that of a matrimonial or erotic nuance to the numerous ritual activities relating to saints. Thus there are numerous variations of celebration of the saint's 'wedding', offering him 'nuptial bed', trays with henna, sweet dough balls (*pind'ī)*, and other matrimonial symbols (in Ghazi Miyan's veneration rituals). The tombs of Loh Langar Shah in Bangalore, Shaikh Saddu in Bengal, Shah 'Abdullah Ghazi in Karachi were places of convergence for prostitutes and transvestites, and individual rites of veneration of these saints evidently went back to erotic cults. The cult of seven righteous women, popular in the Northwest of the subcontinent, was also of an esoteric nature.

They were known by different names: Pak Damaniyan in Lahore, Haft ʻAfifa in Thatta, Bibi Nahzan in Qalat and Sathbhain Asthan in Sukkur. The rituals of veneration of this group of seven were connected with the occult function of virginity and went back to the rite of initiation to womanhood.

Generally speaking, the unification of saints into a stable group is highly typical of the lower levels of medieval society. Thus, in the fifteenth century the cult of Five *Pīrs* (*panj pīriya*) took shape in North India, the group consisting of various saints in various regions of the country. In the main, the Five *Pīrs* were venerated in Punjab, Bengal and in eastern Uttar Pradesh, where even collective tombs were erected for them, of which the most well known happened to be in Sonargaon (Bengal).

However, if the group of Five *Pīrs* consisted of saints, so to say, par excellence – celebrated mystics, warriors for faith and legendary heroes of popular traditions (the most common composition of the group, e.g. Baba Farid, Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht, Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari, Ghazi Miyan and Khwaja Khiḍr) – the choice of other collective saints smells of the profanation of the very idea of Muslim sainthood (*wilāyat*). For example, in Sind as far back as the twelfth century arose the cult of the seven beheaded (*Haft tak*). These were seven fishermen who had eaten up the remains of a miracle worker saint and who were put to death for this crime. In consequence of the terrible meal the fishermen (or rather their dead bodies) posthumously acquired the gift of prophecy and could appear before people in critical moments of their life, foretelling their future. Thus, cannibals, feeding on carrion, started being venerated as saints and the influence of their cult was reflected, in particular by the great Sindhi mystic of the eighteenth century, Shah ʻAbdul Latif, in his ʻEpistle' (*Risālō*). It goes without saying that this cult seems to be a blasphemous parody of Muslim prophecy.

Sometimes the venerated tombs are fake or anonymous graves. Often the name of the locality where they are situated is only consonant with the folkloric or hagiographic toponym. Generally speaking in the world of South Asian saints there is a great number of doubles: a saint whose tomb is venerated at one place, might actually have been buried at quite another place. From this point of view many sacred tombs happen to be cenotaphs. Thus, the town of Ucch in Pakistan is famous for the tomb of the wandering saint Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht. At the same time the *dargāh* in the small Indian town of Manikpur (Uttar Pradesh) also became the place of his cult.

Veneration of Bayazid Bistami's grave in Chittagong is even more at variance with historical facts: this famous Persian mystic never went to East Bengal, and what is more he never left his native place, Bistam in Iran, where he was also laid to eternal rest. There is a tomb in Qalat (Baluchistan), ascribed to Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani,[15] although Baluchis, like other Muslims of the world, know quite well that the 'great intercessor', eponym of the Qadiriyya order, is buried in Baghdad. For that matter what is there to be surprised at if, in Mazar-i Sharif, the main Muslim shrine of Afghanistan, the faithful venerate the cenotaph of Caliph 'Ali, who is actually buried in Najaf, the sacred town of the Shi'a.

In the cult of saints individual provincial features manifested themselves, which the universal equalizing tendency of Islam was unable to erase. Under the cover of the cult of saints surviving relics of religions and archaic beliefs conquered by Islam are still extant in it. Among these relics are the cults of the dead and forefathers. It is these cults which to a large extent explain the peculiarities of the veneration of deceased saints and their tombs. Custodians of a saint's grave and ministers of his cult were always his spiritual or genetic descendants. Although this practice had a Muslim colouring (through the institution of succession, *silsila* or *isnād*), it in fact appertains to the cult of forefathers, because since the times of the tribal system no stranger had the right to perform religious rites at the family altar. Also evident in the image of the saint were the traits of the venerated ancestor: eponym-founder of the Sufi fraternity, ancestor-founder of a trade guild, in general an 'elder'. After his demise such a saint continued to live in the interests of the kin collective, be it an ethnic, professional or caste group. Ultimately the word '*bābā*' itself, denoting 'father' or 'grandfather', became part of the names and nicknames of many South Asian saints, among which particularly well-known are Baba Farid, Baba Tahir and Baba Ratan. The most prominent saint of Sarhad (the North-West Frontier Province) has in his name Pir Baba a combination of 'old man' and 'father' and Wali Baba of Punjab has a combination of 'saint' and 'father'.

Popular consciousness firmly believed that a saint continues to live after his death. Hence the frequent prefix of the word *zinda* ('living', 'eternal') to the name of a saint, for example, Zinda Pir (same as Khwaja Khiḍr), or Zinda Shah Madar. Historian Bada'uni asserted with all seriousness that martyrdom for faith gave such a miraculous power to the holy martyrs (*shahīd*) that they could have children even after death (Schimmel 1980: 136). Faith in the living dead was reflected even in the rituals of saints' veneration. Thus, in the

cenotaph of Sayyid Yusuf Gardezi's tomb (Multan) a small hole has been made, covered with a wooden lid. Through this hole the saint, who died in the twelfth century, talks to the most pious pilgrims or even extends his hand for greeting! Near the doors of the tomb there are also two graves: one of a lion, on whose back the saint supposedly rode into Multan from Afghanistan in the year 1080, and the other of a snake, whom he used to hold in his hand instead of a staff. A visit to the graves of the animals is a part of the rite of *ziyārat* of the saint's tomb.

The cult of saints was from the very beginning under suspicion by the representatives of 'official' Islam, seeing in it *shirk*, or assigning of 'partners' to Allah, i.e. polytheism. In the strict monotheism of Islam, worship of objects and people, even though saints, was looked upon as a terrible sin and infidelity (*kufr*). Particularly intolerant to the cult of saints was the attitude of the Hanbali *madhab*, and in modern times that of the Wahhabis, advocates of the purification of Islam from external influences and of return to its sources. They accused the followers of the cult of saints of *shirk al-'ilm*, of ascribing a certain 'secret knowledge' to the saints, and also of *shirk al-'ibāda*, i.e. of worshipping something besides Allah, in particular of worshipping graves and tombs. Indian authorities of Hanafi *madhab* were not so strict and declared the cult of saints to be an 'unauthorized innovation' (*bid'a*) and an error, which was, however, not as terrible as the accusation of *shirk*.

Besides *shirk* the cult of saints also encroached upon the dogma of Islam about *qaḍā*, i.e. divine predestination. It turned out that in misfortune, in illness or indigence one might not rely upon the will of Allah, but endeavour to remedy the situation by means of a saint's intercession or intervention. Praying to the saint, making him offerings and carrying out ritual activities in his tomb, a faithful endeavoured to change the circumstances of his fate (*qadar*), which as he should have thought, was predetermined from the heavens.

Considering that many *'ulamā* and *faqīhs* were connected with Sufi orders and often happened to be their members, there always existed a particular antagonism between them and the Sufis. In Goldziher's words it was rooted

> partly in the insufficient orthodoxy of the dogmatics and exegetics, which were developing in Sufi schools, and partly in the unrestrained by ritual law and far from holy mode of life of the wandering dervishes, to a great extent abusing their position of Sufis. After all at all times there were mystic

> orders, which adhered to so-called *ibāḥa*,[16] which openly declared its adherents to be free from religious laws.
>
> (Goldziher 1967–71, 2: 32)

'Sober' mystics of moderate doctrine also found the shockingly impudent behaviour of certain *awliyā* in their lifetime just as repellant. Among these *awliyā* there were many ecstatic visionaries, 'possessed' *majdhūbs*, and *malāmatīs*, negating all sorts of restrictions of temporal or spiritual authorities. No less irritating for them must have been the fussy diversity of *ziyārat*, insufficient concentration on the spiritual by the pilgrims, and their utilitarian pragmatism in conjunction with their propensity for coarse entertainment of the type dished out at fairs. In addition, in the rites of the veneration of the saints there was so much of the pagan, licentious or extravagant – from offering of sacrifice to crocodiles in Mangho Pir to collective ritual dances (*dhammal*) in Sehwan – that the aversion which the more enlightened members of the Muslim community had for the cult of saints on the whole becomes understandable.

The spiritual leader of Indian Sunnis, 'renovator of faith' Shah Waliullah (1703–62), whose teaching is close to that of Wahhabis, has formulated his case against pilgrims:

> Everyone who goes to Ajmer [to Mu'inuddin Chishti's tomb], or to the tomb of Salar Mas'ud or similar place because of a need which he wants to be fulfilled is a sinner who commits a sin greater than murder or adultery. Is he not like those who call to Lat and 'Uzza? Only we cannot call them infidels because there is no clear text in the Koran on this particular matter.
>
> (Waliullah 1970: 34)

No less passionately did Shah Waliullah also accuse those mystics, who at the time of *dhikr* invoked God in the terms of Hinduism (for example, *Bhāgwān*, *Paramātmā*, or *Parameśvara*), which was an important part of the proselytizing practice of the early Sufis and owing to which their doctrines became comprehensible to the Hindu masses. Shah Waliullah summed up his philippics against mystics and saints with the phrase: 'The books of the Sufis may be useful for the elect, but for common people they are more dangerous than poison' (Waliullah 1970: 87).

Even Shah Waliullah's famous contemporaries, the 'pillars' of Urdu poetry and members of the Naqshbandiyya fraternity, Mir Dard and

Mazhar Janjanan, held similar views. The first of them called saints and ministers of their cult 'merchants, selling miracles' and the second contended that pilgrims to the tombs of saints were lower than dogs, because they licked thousand-year-old bones whereas all the true knowledge, '*ilm*, is in the *āyats* of Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet. Such a negation of the cult of saints was peculiar to a part of the Muslim elite from the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, when the Mughal policy of religious, including ideological, collaboration was subjected to drastic revision (historians sometimes call this period 'Naqshbandiyya reaction').

The wider the ideas of the Wahhabis spread in India with their preaching of purification of Islam from external influences, from syncretism and also local rites and superstitions, the louder rang the words of censure directed against the cult of saints and popular religion. If in the medieval age neither the Sultan of Delhi nor the Great Mughals, nor for that matter the representatives of spiritual and court aristocracy, were squeamish about pilgrimage to the tombs of saints, then beginning in the nineteenth century the Muslim elite began to persistently refuse to have anything to do with the beliefs and rites of ignorant common people, and its most authoritative leaders – Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Iqbal – saw in the cult of saints one of the reasons for the general decline of Indian Islam and the degeneration of faith.

Of course, a certain role in the hardening of the Indian reformers' attitude towards the cult of saints was played even by the position of the Englishmen, who saw in the veneration of *pīrs* and their tombs one of the manifestations of native 'barbarity'. If the Englishmen displayed a certain respect, even if merely formal, for the institutions of normative Islam, popular religion evoked staunch hostility on their part. The Sufi *shaikhs* and *pīrs* were associated by them with Roman Catholic monasticism – to be frank an incorrect analogy – and that is why in the heat of puritan indignation they stigmatized them as 'parasites' and 'deceivers of the people'.[17]

In this connection the observations of Captain Postans, who served in the last century in Sind, are typical:

> The Pirs, Seyueds and other characters of pretended Moslem sanctity who infest Sindh, occupy a most important position amongst its inhabitants. From the Amirs, downwards, all Mohammedans being profoundly ignorant of any but the common forms of their religion, place implicit faith in the holiness of spiritual pastors and the efficacy of their

> devotion. The consequence is that lazy Seyuds and worthless professors of religious zeal are patronized in Sindh to a degree elsewhere unknown: they are essentially a priest-ridden people; and an early writer, in describing their character, says, 'That the Sindhian shows no liberality but in feeding lazy Seyuds, no zeal but in propagating the faith, no spirit but in celebrating the Ede, and no taste but in ornamenting old tombs'. Some of the finest portions of the country are held in *Inam*, or gift, by these men, and every Biluchi chieftain and tribe has its *Pir Murshid* or spiritual pastor, who collects a certain fee in kind for his holy offices. Khorassan, Cabul, Pishin in Central Asia, Persia, and all parts of India, contribute their quota of these blood-suckers.
> (Postans 1973: 50–1)

Criticism of the 'wild growth' of the cult of saints, of 'boundless' syncretism and of downright erosion of religio-cultural boundaries resounded throughout the course of a long period of Indian history – from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. However, in different historical contexts this criticism was perceived differently. Those who in the medieval age cautioned against secularization and distortion of Islam in the cult of saints, as was done by the historians Barani and Bada'uni, the theologian Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the poet Mir Dard and by the Great Mughal, Aurangzeb, earned the reputation of being orthodox, fundamentalists and ardent opponents of inter-religious collaboration. On the other hand, those who already in an era close to our times, like Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Altaf Husain Hali and Iqbal, dreamt of the revival of the purity of Islam and condemned *pirism* (Iqbal's neologism from the word *pīr*) and 'lowly' superstitions won the fame of enlightened reformers and progressive thinkers. Such is yet another paradox of history . . .

For the sake of fairness it should be said that notwithstanding the extent to which the practice of the veneration of saints might have deviated from the precepts of Islam, *awliyā* themselves were not involved in it to any great extent: in their tracts, discourses, autobiographies and spiritual poetry they emphasized their adherence to the *Sharī'at*, Qur'ān and Sunna of the Prophet. Jorge Luis Borges, having a perfect flair for all religions and cultures, once observed: 'Islam has always tolerantly regarded the appearance of God's trusted chosen ones, notwithstanding their ferocity or lack of modesty, if only their words did not offend orthodox faith' (Borges 1957, 2: 83).

The cult of saints was and remains a living heritage of the 'composite' culture of South Asia, common to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Certain towns of the subcontinent like Ajmer, Sehwan and Ucch continue to develop only thanks to their famous *dargāhs*. The names of these towns are usually accompanied by the word *sharīf* which means 'noble', or 'holy'. Entire settlements like Bhit Shah in Sind, Pakpattan or Mithankot[18] in Punjab exist exclusively owing to the tombs of famous saints which happen to be on their territory. Historical sources, official documents, travelogues and memoirs and works of fiction testify to the truly national and essentially supra-religious nature of the practice of the veneration of sacred tombs.

The Indian writer of our times, Krishan Chandar, remembering his mother, wrote:

> She came here to venerate Haji Pir's *mazār*. Craving for sacred places ran in my mummy's blood. She did not read books on national unity, did not hear speeches on religious tolerance and did not know words like humanism and equality of people . . . To make up for it she visited Hindu temple as well as Sikh *gurdwārā*, prayed to Hindu gods and made offerings at the *mazārs* of Muslim saints – and all this also ran in her blood. Thus, like her, lived whole generation in old, illiterate, undivided India and by their efforts in the course of many centuries was the composite national culture created.
>
> (Chandar n.d.: 19–20)

Today, fewer people than before are involved in the ritual veneration of tombs – as pilgrims or ministers of the cult. In the last century the British abolished the systems of w*aqf* – tax-free plots of land and other property offerings for religious purposes – which were the basis of the material well-being of all the charitable and educational institutions of the medieval age, including *dargāhs*. This brought about the gradual decline of many formerly rich and flourishing ritual complexes.

In Pakistan the system of state patronage of the saints' tombs was restored and today they are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Awqaf and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Nevertheless, in practice many *dargāhs* and *mazārs* continue to be the property of the family or *silsila* of the saint and, therefore, the pious duty of making payment for their repairs, maintenance, community services and feeding of thousands of pilgrims lies like a heavy burden on the

shoulders of private persons, in particular the *pīr*, the spiritual successor of a saint and the head of the *dargāh*. It is true that in our times a *sajjādanishīn* may be in service in a temporal establishment, has a family and may not necessarily live in the *dargāh*. He is supposed to spend a few nights in a year at the *mazār* of his ancestor saint, and participate in *maulūd*, ‘*urs* and other festive ceremonies.

A great deal has been written about the cult of saints by Western travellers, the South Asian men of letters and publicists and, of course, by scholars: this phenomenon seemed to be too broad-based and picturesque to be ignored. Writers of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries passionately exposed the greediness and hypocrisy of *pīrs*, who made a fortune out of the blind faith and backwardness of the common people. Indeed, the wealth of major *dargāhs* was becoming more and more flagrantly incompatible with the principles of pious poverty (*faqr*), which the Sufis propagated, and with the destitution of the majority of pilgrims.

In contrast to the writers, South Asian politicians were compelled to take into consideration the important place the cult of a saint had in people’s consciousness. Thus, in January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi laid down as one of the conditions for breaking yet another of his fasts unto death the restoration of the tomb of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Delhi, which was desecrated by Hindus and Sikhs during the murderous communal clashes accompanying the partition of India. The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and the founder of Pakistan Muhammad ‘Ali Jinnah have written about the value of the spiritual legacy of the saints for the culture of the independent states of the subcontinent.

Today in Pakistan the veneration of saints is actively used as an important factor of national self-consciousness in the official cultural policy of the state. In programmatic official documents the reader is told that:

> The bond between Islam and Pakistani culture was strengthened by the Sufis, saints and scholars. The Sufi poets used native metaphors, similes and love stories to spread the message of Islam. Even music, dance, painting and songs gave eternal life to some of philosophical dimensions of Islam . . . It was the popular Islam with its intellectual dimensions that supported the establishment of an independent Pakistan and not the political Islam of the mulla which had no cultural roots in this territory.
>
> (*The Cultural Policy of Pakistan* 1995: 18)

As a scholarly problem the cult of the saints attracted the attention of the researchers in the last century itself: many pioneers in the field of the study of culture and the literature of the subcontinent, including the outstanding French scholar Garcin de Tassy, German missionary Ernst Trump and the brilliant English anthropologist Richard Burton wrote about it. Naturally, the most significant contribution to the scientific study of the cult of saints was made by the scholars of India and Pakistan, who have published monuments of Sufi literature in Persian and Indian languages: poetical works (*kalām*) and theological tracts (*risāla*) of saints, voluminous hagiographic literature, including discourses (*malfūẓāt)*, epistolary heritage (*maktūbāt*), saints' lives (*manāqib*), collections of saints' biographies (*ṭabaqāt al-awliyā*) and also historical chronicles (*tawārīkh*), which are the most authentic source of information about saints and the part they played in medieval society.

A special role in attracting Western scholars to this field of science was played by the works of the outstanding researcher of the history and culture of Islam, Annemarie Schimmel. Her numerous books and articles retrace the 'generic' characteristics of South Asian Islam and the cult of saints as well as their 'specific' local characteristics. Schimmel was one of the first to look at the history of Indian Islam and, in particular, its syncretic forms, from the point of view of typology, as mutually identified concepts, 'facts with twin motivation', and not as the result of external influences. She also has precedence in the study of *ziyārat* in India and Pakistan: it can be said that she detached this problem from the field of ethnology and brought it to the arena of the science of religion.

Studies of the saints' cult belong to the different fields of humanities. In the first instance these are Islamic and Sufi studies, for which this problem is important but nevertheless peripheral. Then follows ethnology, which studies popular religion with reference to its modern practice and rituals. Philology has made its own contribution in the study of Sufi literature and hagiography. Art criticism has also not remained aloof since many *mazārs* and *dargāhs* are of considerable interest as architectural monuments. To me, probably by force of personal predilections, a holistic approach of cultural anthropology seems to be most fruitful, which allows determining the place of the cult of saints in the culture of South Asia and its connection with other forms of spiritual and social life.

For the arousal of interest in the tombs of Muslim saints I am obliged to the lasting impression left on me many years ago during my first visit to the *dargāh* of Nizamuddin Awliya in Delhi. It happens

to be in the area of the capital now bearing the name of this saint and situated a little to the south of Shahjahanabad – the Delhi of the Great Mughals. Nevertheless, the hordes of tourists visiting the Red Fort and Jamaʿ Masjid do not drop in here. But it is exactly here that the genuine and not artificially restored medieval age reigns. A dizzy sensation of breaking through the barrier of time is experienced by anyone who, with difficulty, elbows their way through the noisy crowd of pilgrims, holding in their hands heaps of rose-petals, among long-haired dervishes, wearing baggy caftans and high pointed caps (*kulāhs*), and among loud-mouthed vendors of flowers, perfumes, beads, cheap popular prints, amulets and other 'cult articles'.

From the row of stalls upwards in the direction of the fretted portal runs a round staircase, the steps of which have for ages been polished bright by hundreds of thousands of bare feet, and high in the doorway of the portal the delicate silhouette of the marble mausoleum shows through, as if painted on the silvery 'backdrop' of the sky of Delhi in winter. Most of the South Asian tombs have been built exactly like this, on hills, hillocks or artificial mounds, and their gold, snow-white, but more often green domes once upon a time dominated the squat urban buildings around them. Multi-step staircases, leading to the tomb, are not only a constructional necessity: this is also an architecturally materialized metaphor of spiritual ascent, particularly difficult for the infirm and the cripple, a metaphor of both physical and internal upgrade, which has to be surmounted by the pilgrim in order to come nearer to the shrine. For that matter, the domes of *mazārs* and *dargāhs* not only tower above urban blocks and ramparts of fortresses: they also enliven the landscape of the scorched Deccan plateau and deserts of Sind, the green fields of Punjab and the mountains of Baluchistan.

The historically formed combination of cube and sphere in the architecture of the Muslim tomb has found a corresponding mystic interpretation. In the figure of the cube is expressed the ideal combination of space, form and surface – this is a symbol of symmetry, equilibrium and stability. On the top the cube is crowned with a spherical dome, in other words, on a geometrical plane the circumference of the base of the dome rests on the square of the upper surface of the cube. In this way, in the space of the tomb square is transformed into circumference, which happens to be one of the metaphors of transformation of the soul of the mystic on the Path (Bakhtiar 1976: 85).

The symbolism of the dome is even more obvious: in it the Sufi concept of the unity of the centre, circumference and sphere is

realized. The form and extent of the dome unfold from the pinnacle of the dome by movement downwards, gradually expanding, as the universe emanates from the primordial Existence along the 'arc of descent' (*tanāzul*); whereas by movement upwards they roll themselves up, tapering into the point of intersection of the axes at the pinnacle, which corresponds to mystic ascension along the 'arc of ascent' (*taraqqī*), from diversity to primordial unity. It is natural that such integral architectural elements of the tomb as doors (*darwāza*), portal (*peshtāq*) and arcade (*aiwān*) also had their Sufi connotations.

It is true that on the territory of the subcontinent we come across another architectural type of tomb at times – the so-called 'residential' tomb, an oblong building with a flat roof without a dome, with numerous halls and with towers or minarets at the four corners. 'Residential' tombs were built mainly on plains, near artificial reservoirs or on the intersection of axes of specially laid out parks. There are a lot of such tombs particularly in Punjab, and in recent times Sikh rulers and subsequently Englishmen also used them as their residences.

In Christian tradition the mode of behaviour of a pilgrim visiting a tomb demands reverential silence and outward restraint. In the Indian *dargāhs*, on the contrary, deafening noise and animated movements always reign, as in an Eastern bazaar. Bustle and hubbub reach their climax at the time of '*urs*, when a special atmosphere of nervous but nonetheless festive tension, an atmosphere of expectation of miracle, comes into being in the *dargāh*. It is absolutely contrary to the mournful and dismal mood which seizes the visitors of a Shi'a *Imāmbāra*. '*Urs* is an overcoming of physical death, a testimony of life after life and its meaning consists not in the mourning for the saint but in the joy from contact with his *baraka*. That is why near a tomb you will see neither tears nor hear sorrowful moans – here you will come across altogether different sounds.

One hears the disturbing roar of *ṭabla* (drums), the long drawn-out moan of a harmonium, to the accompaniment of which singers, sitting near the entrance to the tomb, in chorus perform *qawwālī*, religious songs in the saint's honour. Dervishes impetuously scurry about the place, their long curly hair drifting loose in all directions, their *kulāhs* cocked to one side – this is not a tribute to foppery, although the word *kajkulāh* (one wearing his cap awry) itself has acquired the meaning of a fop or dandy. This is a poetic image, which can be traced back to the *ḥadīth* 'I saw my Lord in the form of a young man with his cap awry' (Schimmel 1975: 290).[19] Dervishes

keep on shouting at fidgety and muddle-headed pilgrims, telling them to make haste: to make a bow quickly at the threshold, to enter the stuffy perfumed dusk of the tomb, throw a handful of petals on it and come out again, into the crush of human hustle and bustle around the *mazār*. In the courtyard pilgrims shout themselves hoarse, as if trying to make themselves heard by the saint, mutter prayers and join in the general hubbub. Inside the tomb, they restrain their ardour to some extent, but still do not shut their mouths: the loud cacophony typical of a fair is replaced by a monotonous hum. In a word, it is perhaps possible to find reverential silence in a *dargāh* only in the morning on weekdays, when pilgrims are either sleeping or eating, dervishes are sitting in their cells and attendants are busy about the house.

As a woman, my entry into the sanctum is prohibited: I can see the sheet of brocade covering the tomb, overlain with rose-petals, only through fretted lattice. While I try to make out something in the faint, shimmering light and to catch something coherent in the discordant chorus of voices, the *pīr*, Khwaja Hasan Thani Nizami, makes his appearance. His spiritual genealogy, Nizamiyya (one of the two branches of the maternal fraternity Chishtiyya), goes back to Nizamuddin Awliya himself. The word *Thānī* ('Second') in the *pīr*'s name signifies that he has succeeded to his father Khwaja Hasan Nizami the first (1879–1955), who happily combined the mission of a mystic with the career of a journalist, writer and scholar (Khwaja Hasan 1987).

In the presence of the *sajjādanishīn* the deafening hubbub quietens down a little and the chaotic turbulence of people is put in order. From all directions people reach out to him for a blessing. Whether radiating *baraka*, charisma, or simple human charm, he makes the round of his domains, coming to a stop for a short while with every one who craves his attention. For common people *pīr* is a living successor of the saint and bearer of his bliss; they come to him to get their physical and spiritual infirmities healed, from him they seek directions in matters of faith and practical advice, right up to the question of whom to vote for in the next elections.

It is from the meetings and conversations with this descendent of a saint and the custodian of his heritage that the conception for this book came into existence.

2

THE HERMIT OF LAHORE

> Everywhere at the places where bare and barren desert was interspersed with a spring, patch of land, a small or big oasis, at that time there lived the hermits, some in total solitude, others in small fraternities, they lived in poverty and in love for the neighbour, devoted to a certain melancholic *ars moriendi*, a certain art of dying, of withdrawal from the world and one's own self and transition to Him, to the Saviour, to the radiant and eternal kingdom. Visited by angels and demons, they composed hymns, drove away the demons, healed, blessed, as if having made up their mind to compensate for earthly delight, rudeness and carnality of many bygone and many future epochs with the powerful upsurge of enthusiasm and with the ecstatic action of renunciation of the world.
>
> (Hesse 1945, 1: 387–8)

These words of Hermann Hesse about Christian saints are equally applicable to the South Asian *awliyā*.

One of the most intriguing questions, arising in the course of study of the cult of saints, happens to be: who became a *walī* in the mass consciousness of the faithful and why? The answers to these questions are relatively clear in the case of hermits and ascetics, about whom Hesse has written, and also in the case of heroes and martyrs, to whom wonder-working powers can be easily ascribed. The lives of characters from legend and folklore are by definition fabulous, but it is far more difficult to discern any strict regularity in the canonization of many historical people.

The Shaikh of the Naqshbandiyya fraternity, 'the renovator of the second millennium', Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), for example, possessed unique spiritual energy and had unprecedented influence

over his contemporaries as well as on later generations – it would be difficult to name any well-known mystic or even temporal thinker of the subsequent epoch who was not in some way influenced by the concept of *waḥdat ash-shuhūd* ('the unity of witness') formulated by him. He had actually set the already mentioned 'Naqshbandi reaction', which significantly changed the face of Indian Sufism, in motion. In spite of his particular services to the Muslim community, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, after his demise, never became a public saint, although his tomb in Sirhind enjoyed universal esteem, and Muhammad Iqbal in one of the verses of the collection *Bāl-i Jibrīl* ('Gabriel's Wing') glorified the dust from his tomb, which is usually done only with respect to the saints.[1]

Another favourite of Iqbal, depicted by him in the poem *Javīd Nāma* ('Book of Eternity') – the ruler of Mysore Tipu Sultan (1750–99), the active fighter for faith – who died a martyr's death – was also not honoured with sainthood. The stormy biography of Tipu Sultan, full of striking heroic events, provided ample opportunity to ascribe miracles and supernatural deeds to him. In a notebook, now preserved in the India Office Library, Tipu used to write down his visions, in which the saints and great poets of the past visited him. In one such vision he saw caliph 'Ali, who conveyed the Prophet's message to him: Muhammad (PBUH) says he will not set foot in paradise without Tipu Sultan (Schimmel 1980: 169)! For anyone else such 'facts' in the biography (or autobiography) would have been quite sufficient for *malfūẓāt* and *manāqib*, but for some reason this did not happen with Tipu: although he is remembered in folk songs and performances of traditional theatre, nobody revers him as a saint.

Finally, the halo of sainthood is also somehow missing from the head of Iqbal, the spokesman of Indian Islam in our age (to be fair, he never laid claim to it himself). His power over the minds of the compatriots and acclamation by the Western elite, his leading role in the historic drama of the formation of Pakistan, his place in the memories of subsequent grateful generations, led to the poet's mausoleum near the gates of Badshahi Masjid being transformed into one of the main sights of Lahore. However, all these, as it turned out, are landmarks on the way to worldly (let us concede even worldwide) fame, but not to sainthood. Whereas a certain contemporary of Iqbal, unknown beyond the borders of Punjab, Mihr 'Ali Shah (1859–1937), a recluse, living a long way from the socio-political storms of those times, is revered as the most outstanding Pakistani saint, and his *dargāh* Golra Sharif (Islamabad) is a place of mass pilgrimage.[2]

These examples, in my view, confirm that neither religious services, socially significant work, a heroic death nor martyrdom by themselves ensure a man sainthood. A person, possessing great spiritual energy, acquired the fame of a saint only if his deeds were imbued with the radiance of the supernatural. The romance of sainthood was nourished mainly by mythologems and *Wanderlegenden*, invariably impinging upon the collective imagination. In other words, an ideal saint is not at all an active hero of his time, a person in the public eye like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, but rather his modest, and therefore more mysterious, contemporary, who remains in the shadows like, for example, Miyan Mir (1550–1635), one of the guardian saints of Lahore to whom Dara Shikoh has dedicated the hagiographic work *Sakīnāt al-awliyā* ('The Calmness of the Saints').[3]

The causes of the transformation of an actually existing person into a saint is closely bound up with how the historical biography correlates with the hagiographic. Usually only the latter, compiled posthumously, is available to us. Even in those rare instances, when historical chronicles or the saint's own compositions have preserved for us the authentic facts of his life (most often these are travels, pilgrimages to tombs, meetings with other mystics), it is practically impossible to single out that decisive episode, that abrupt upsurge (or downswing) of his life story, on which the edifice of sainthood was subsequently erected. Biographies of many Indian saints, had they been authentic, would have seemed to have been inadequate in their lack of significant events: early and prolonged discipleship, initiation into the fraternity, monotonous years of life in the *k͟hānqāh*, instruction of *murīds* (disciples), occasional journeys and, crowning it all, death on the threshold of sainthood. It is clear that the real destinies of these people were settled not in public, but exclusively in the sphere of spiritual search. The *manāqib*, presenting these destinies adorned with the garland of striking, wonderful, at times adventurous events, only metaphorically actualize the path of the mystic, full of ordeals and spiritual enlightenment, leading to the cognition of God. For this very reason biographies of the most outstanding *awliyā*, like Data Ganjbaksh, Mu'inuddin Chishti, Baba Farid, Nizamuddin Awliya, Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, and Shah 'Abdul Latif Bhitai, written by contemporary scholars, come under the category of mixed biographical-hagiographic genre, where scanty facts of history are generously adorned with picturesque material of hagiographic literature.

About one thing there is no doubt, the question of sainthood was finally decided only by death, by union with the Divine Beloved;

that is why tradition seldom records the date of birth of a saint, apparently because of its uselessness, but always the exact date of his assumption, which becomes the cult anniversary of his ‘*urs*. We have to concede that the decisive factor of transformation of a mystic into a saint was by no means his worldly life, even if full of virtue, great deeds of asceticism and renunciation, but the wonderful gift of *baraka*, which the disciples and followers, neighbours and members of the community of the saint or some other groups of the social environment began to sense all of a sudden and without any definitive reason.

Hagiographic literature is never tired of narrating the occasions of fortuitous revelation of *baraka*: on coming across an unknown tomb a passer-by, or a shepherd, or a merchant, travelling in connection with his commercial business, is all of a sudden overcome by spiritual trepidation, followed by spiritual or physical healing. In greater measure this applied to the tombs of unpretentious ‘spontaneous’ saints – vagrant *qalandars*, lonely recluses, peculiar *malāmatīs*, in short, to all those not connected with fraternities and in their lifetime not having influential patrons or devoted *murīds*. The posthumous fame of those who strove for spiritual perfection in the lap of the fraternity was taken care of by the *ṭarīqa* itself, which canonized its *shaikhs* even in their lifetime.

As the news spread in the region about the *baraka* radiating from the tomb, it came to be regarded as a local shrine – inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, or of the nearby *muḥallas* (quarters) of a town, or members of a particular caste and trade community started thronging around the tomb. The involvement of sultans, members of their families, military leaders, big landowners and other important dignitaries of this world considerably consolidated the status of the saint. The representatives of state authority or simply rich people often reconstructed, enlarged and beautified the tomb, instituted *waqfs* for its maintenance, awarded lands and money to the saint’s descendants. Such a fusion of spontaneous lower-class reverence with the recognition of the tomb on the part of the upper strata of society, taking institutional and material form, once and for all consolidated the reputation of sanctity for the tomb.

The unrestrained yearning in the consciousness of the masses for the materialized embodiment of everything having a bearing on faith called into being the images of the saints, at times from absolute obscurity, without any regard whatsoever for logic or rational explanation. As has been already mentioned, wherever faith rests on figurative concepts it is hardly possible to discern any marked

difference between the types, degree and, let us add, motivation of sainthood of the elements constituting it. One candidate for sainthood became a saint because he was a highly learned person and possessed comprehensive knowledge; another, because he held all kind of knowledge in contempt and was illiterate;[4] a third, for meekness and charity; a fourth, for his stern and vindictive disposition; a fifth, owing to his ascetic feats and strict piety; a sixth, because of his deviant and eccentric conduct – the list of these mutually exclusive 'reasons' of sainthood, which hardly explain anything, can be continued to any length.

The cult of *awliyā* grew on the soil of not intellectual but pragmatic Sufism, which, with all the diversity of trends, fraternities and sects, can be reduced to two main schools – *sukr* (intoxication) and *saḥw* (sobriety). The first school, also called Taifuriyya, is connected with the name, already more than once referred to, of the Persian mystic Bayazid (Abu Yazid) Taifur al-Bistami (died 875). The ecstatic rapture and 'intoxication' with the love of God are typical of his teaching in the first place. He was one of the first to describe the spiritual sensation of complete dissolution of one's own ego in God, a state that he called *fanā*. Elaboration of the postulates of the second school, Junaidiyya, can be traced back to the person of the Baghdad mystic Abul Qasim Junaid (died 910). Whilst acknowledging the validity of al-Bistami's teaching of *fanā*, Junaid considered it to be an intermediate stage, because 'it is incumbent upon a perfect mystic to proceed further, to the state of "sobriety", in which his personal cognition of God could make out of him a more perfect human being with absolute self-control and composure' (*Islam* 1991: 69). Junaid's teaching was considered to be moderate and was more acceptable to the representatives of normative Islam than was the teaching of Taifuriyya.

One of the earliest South Asian saints, with the long-winded Muslim name Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri al-Ghaznawi, whom the faithful call by the nickname Data Ganjbaksh, was the guardian saint of Lahore and belonged to the Junaidiyya school. The cause of the transformation of this scholar, historian and propagator of Sufism into a well-loved popular saint turned out to be his book *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (Revelation of the Veiled), whose authority I have already invoked more than once.[5]

Al-Hujwiri (died between 1072–6) is the author of the first-ever written work in Persian where the history, ideology and practice of Sufism and also brief biographies of seventy-four of the most well-known Sufi *shai<u>kh</u>s* are systematically presented. The book exerted

great influence on the entire subsequent hagiographic tradition: references to and borrowings from it are to be found in such famous works as ‘Attar’s *Tadhkirat al-awliyā* (Memoirs of the Saints) and Jami’s *Nafahāt al-uns* (Whiffs of Friendship). Dara Shikoh, constantly quoting al-Hujwiri in *Safīnāt al-awliyā*, gives an appraisal of his predecessor’s work: ‘Among the books on *taṣawwuf* not even one has been composed so well as the “Revelation of the Veiled”, and no one can raise any objection to it’ (Dara Shikoh 1965: 22).

Information about al-Hujwiri is well known at least from V. A. Zhukovsky’s foreword to the edition of the Persian text of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (al-Hujwiri 1926: 15) and R. Nicholson’s preface to its English translation. I would, therefore, dwell on them only in witness of the fact that one’s biography cannot serve as the basis for sainthood. According to R. Nicholson, al-Hujwiri was born in the last decade of the tenth century or in the first decade of the eleventh century in Ghazna. Dara Shikoh explains the three-tier *nisba* of the saint – al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri al-Ghaznavi by the fact that Jullab and Hujwir are two regions of the city of Ghazna (Dara Shikoh 1965: 56). A Sunnite of Hanafi *madhab*, born to a family known for its piety, he received a traditional Muslim education and at an early age showed the faculty of a religious writer and a vocation for mysticism.

The *Kashf al-maḥjūb* is the last in chronological order and the only extant work of al-Hujwiri, his *magnum opus*. According to his own statement he was the author of another nine books (including a *dīwān* of verses), none of which are available now. To a certain extent al-Hujwiri became a victim of the absence of the law of copyright. He writes:

> A certain individual borrowed my poetical works, of which there was no other copy, and retained the manuscript in his possession, and circulated it, and struck out my name which stood at its head, and caused all my labour to be lost. May God forgive him! I had also composed another book, entitled ‘The Highway of Religion’ (*Minhaj ad-din*), on the method of Sufism – may God make it flourish! A shallow pretender, whose words carry no weight, erased my name from the title page and gave out to the public that he was the author, notwithstanding that connoisseurs laughed at his assertion.
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 2)

Having suffered twice from literary piracy, al-Hujwiri became more cautious, and whether called for or not, inserted his own name into

almost every chapter. However, heightened anxiety for the protection of his authorship did not at all mean that al-Hujwiri was vainglorious. Rather, on the contrary, the text of *Kashf al- maḥjūb* reveals the author to be an open-hearted person, devoid of unbridled pretensions, which are peculiar to ecstatic mystics, a person full of gentle quietism and having a propensity for *mukāshafa* (meditative knowledge). He narrates about himself with restraint and in a self-deprecating tone, in every way possible emphasizing his own imperfection against a background of the spiritual merits of his mentors and interlocutors. But al-Hujwiri's sincere desire not to attract excessive attention to his own personality and problems is perceptible through the self-disparagement traditional for every Muslim author. The exhortation of Thomas à Kempis (1379–1471) *Ama nesciri* ('Be fond of abiding in obscurity'), reiterated over and over by Christian mystics, suits him perfectly well.

The episode of the death of his spiritual mentor Abul Fazl al-Khuttali[6] can serve as a typical example of the contextual device by which al-Hujwiri tells us about himself as if in parentheses:

> While he lay on death-bed, his head resting on my bosom (and at that time I was feeling hurt, as men often do, by the behaviour of a friend of mine), he said to me: 'O my son, I will tell thee one article of belief which, if thou holdest it firmly, will deliver thee from all troubles. Whatever good or evil God creates, do not in any place or circumstance quarrel with His action or be aggrieved in thy heart.' He gave no further injunctions, but yielded up his soul.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 167)

Like many Sufis before and after him, al-Hujwiri travelled all over the Muslim world in search of knowledge and for intercourse with the spiritual fraternity. Maveraunnahr, Azerbaijan, Khurasan, Nishapur, Bistam, Tus, Damascus, Baghdad, Khuzistan, Fars, Farghana, Mayhana, Merv, Bukhara, Turkestan and, finally, Lahore are part of the geography of his wanderings. As a matter of fact al-Hujwiri's autobiography in which there was room for quite ordinary human foibles, is made up exactly of whatever happened in the course of these wanderings. For example, during the years of his sojourn in Iraq the future saint got up to the neck in debt:

> Once, in the territories of 'Iraq, I was restlessly occupied in seeking wealth and squandering it, and I had run largely into

> debt. Everyone who wanted anything turned to me, and I was troubled and at a loss to know how I could accomplish their desires.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 345)

Al-Hujwiri makes a still more shocking confession in connection with his views regarding women and matrimony:

> After God had preserved me for eleven years from the dangers of matrimony, it was my destiny to fall in love with the description of a woman whom I had never seen, and during a whole year my passion so absorbed me that my religion was near being ruined, until at last God in His bounty gave protection to my wretched heart and mercifully delivered me.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 364)

Confessions of such a type did not adorn a mystic who as a youth had taken to the Path, and true humility and courage were required in order to make a public declaration of them.

Apart from meetings and conversations with numerous *shaikhs*, al-Hujwiri visited tombs of famous saints for the general purpose of *murāqaba* as well as on the occasions when *ziyārat* was dictated by practical necessity.

> Once I, ‘Ali b. ‘Uthman al-Jullabi, found myself in a difficulty. After many devotional exercises undertaken in the hope of clearing it away, I repaired – as I had done with success on a former occasion – to the tomb of Abu Yazid, and stayed beside it for a space of three months, performing every day three ablutions and thirty purifications in the hope that my difficulty might be removed. It was not, however; so I departed and journeyed towards Khurasan.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 68–9)

Here the reference is, of course, not to worldly difficulties, but to one of the endless spiritual obstacles which the mystic came across in his Path. However, it is symptomatic that al-Hujwiri, who was himself a follower of Junaid’s school of ‘sobriety’, sought the way out of the difficult situation in the tomb of the progenitor of the school of ‘intoxication’. This once again proves that in the eleventh century there still did not exist any rigorism, selectivity and tendentiousness

in the practice of the veneration of tombs of the saints: once reckoned to be among the *awliyā*, a saint remained the same for all, irrespective of personal predilections and affiliation to one or the other trend in Sufism. As emphasized repeatedly by al-Hujwiri in his book, all the *awliyā* are equal amongst them, and one *wilāyat* is in no way better than the other.

Incidentally, in Khurasan, where al-Hujwiri arrived after the failure in Bistam, something happened to him which expressively depicts the morals and manners of certain *khānqāhs*. Having stayed for the night in the cloister of the local Sufis, he unexpectedly became the object of their sneers and scoffs. While the fraternity itself was enjoying a rich meal he was offered as food breadcrumbs, turned green with mould.

> They lodged me on a roof, while they themselves went up to a roof above mine, and set before me dry bread which had turned green, while I was drawing into my nostrils the savour of the viands with which they regaled themselves. All the time they were addressing derisive remarks to me from the roof. When they finished the food, they began to pelt me with the skins of the melons, which they had eaten, by way of showing how pleased they were with themselves and how lightly they thought of me. I said in my heart: 'O Lord God, were it not that they are wearing the dress of Thy friends, I would not have borne this from them'.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 69)

But, of course, al-Hujwiri's autobiography would not have reflected a mystic's peculiar world perception had wonderful supernatural events not taken place in it from time to time. Thus, in Mayhana, at the grave of his senior contemporary Abu Sa'id bin Abul Khair (died 1049), al-Hujwiri was witness to a miracle:

> While I was sitting alone, as is my custom, beside the tomb of Shaykh Abu Sa'id at Mihna, I saw a white pigeon fly under the cloth covering the sepulchre. I supposed that the bird had escaped from its owner, but when I looked under the cloth nothing was to be seen. This happened again next day, and also on the third day. I was at a loss to understand it, until one night I dreamed of the saint and asked him about my experience. He answered: 'This pigeon is my good conduct, which comes every day to my tomb to feast with me'.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 235)

Miraculous or portentous dreams accompany al-Hujwiri in all his travels. In Damascus he stops at the tomb of Bilal b.Rabah and in his dream sees Mecca and the Prophet, who was affectionately pressing some elderly person to his bosom.

> I ran to him and kissed the back of his foot, and stood marvelling who the old man might be; and the Apostle was miraculously aware of my secret thought and said to me: 'This is thy Imam and the Imam of thy countrymen', meaning Abu Hanifa.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 95)[7]

The gift of divining one's thoughts, of foretelling the future and of general clairvoyance, forming a part of *karāmāt* (miracles), is ascribed by al-Hujwiri to the most important of those mystics whom he had occasion to meet. During his visit to Farghana he became acquainted with a Shaikh, Bab 'Umar by name, ranking high in the hierarchy of the saints (al-Hujwiri calls him one of the four *awtād*, 'supports', of this world).

> When I entered his presence he said: 'Why have you come?' I replied: 'In order that I might see the Shaykh in person and that he might look on me with kindness'. He said: 'I have been seeing you continually since such and such a day, and I wish to see you as long as you are not removed from my sight'. I computed the day and year: it was the very day on which my conversion began. The Shaykh said: 'To traverse distance is child's play: henceforth pay visits by means of thought; it is not worth while to visit any person, and there is no virtue in bodily presence'.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 234–35)

Another time the author makes for Ramla to call upon the mystic Ibn al-Mu'alla. He is accompanied by two dervishes, with whom he makes an agreement: 'On the way we arranged that each of us should think of the matter concerning which we were in doubt, in order that that venerable director might tell us our secret thoughts and solve our difficulties' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 343). Mystics often subjected their mentors or rivals to such 'examinations' of the gift of prevision and thought-reading at a distance; these examinations were as if a part of the routine of spiritual intercourse, and constituted a peculiar parapsychological game, although *murshids* and *pīrs* invariably

condemned them as a temptation and manifestation of vanity. On this particular occasion al-Hujwiri thought of obtaining the manuscript of verses and *munājāt* (hymns and supplications addressed to God) of Mansur al-Hallaj; one of his fellow-travellers wished to be healed of the disease of the spleen from which he was suffering, and the other dervish, apparently for fun, wished for a particular kind of sweetmeat 'of different colours'.[8] And indeed we should not be surprised to learn that on arrival at the old man's place Hallaj's manuscripts seemed to be just waiting for al-Hujwiri, and the fellow-traveller afflicted with disease made a recovery. However, the wish of the second dervish was deemed by Ibn al-Mu'alla to be incompatible with the status of a mystic and he refused to fulfil it with the words: 'Parti-coloured sweetmeat is eaten by soldiers; you are dressed as a saint, and the dress of a saint does not accord with the appetite of a soldier. Choose one or the other' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 344).

Life spent all the time on the journey springs its own surprises upon al-Hujwiri in the form of amazing and unexpected incidents. A causal intellect would have seen in the various odd occurrences a coincidence, a trick or a deception, but a mystic's gaze discerns a miracle. The joyful unsuspecting willingness with which al-Hijwiri meets everything unusual halfway is a remarkable and long-lost virtue of a man of the Middle Ages. Arriving in Tus to visit the celebrated Abul Qasim al-Gurgani, he finds this saint in a mosque, explaining to a column the answer to that very question which he himself was intending to ask the saint. It turns out that the question has not yet been asked, but the answer has already been obtained. 'O Shaykh,' I cried, 'to whom art thou saying this?' He replied: 'O son, God just now caused this pillar to speak and ask me this question' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 234). Al-Hujwiri sees in it neither a trick nor a coincidence, and interprets this entire episode in favour of the saint's clairvoyance.

In the already mentioned Bab 'Umar's house the guest was served 'a dish of new grapes, although it was not the season for them, and some fresh ripe dates, which cannot possibly be procured in Farghana' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 235). The commonplace rational explanation that the fruits might have been brought from far away appears not to cross al-Hujwiri's mind, and he once again pays homage to the Shaikh's miraculous power. On the way to Damascus al-Hujwiri and his mentor Abul 'Abbas al-Ashqani are caught in a downpour. The disciple was soaked and was splashed all over with mud, whereas the *murshid*'s clothes and footwear were clean and dry. This is of course amazing, although it is possible to find some logical reason for the situation in question. For al-Hujwiri the sole reason lies in the

mentor's words: 'God has preserved me from mud ever since I put unquestioning trust in Him and guarded my interior from the desolation of cupidity' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 234). Once again the author gives himself up to self-deprecation, unequivocally implying that it was exactly here that his 'internal dirt' came to light.

For al-Hujwiri the natural world is full of unexplained phenomena to an even greater extent than is the world of human relations. In India he saw 'a worm which appeared in a deadly poison and lived by it, because that poison was its whole being' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 407). In Turkistan he observes a burning mountain, 'from the rocks of which salammoniac fumes were boiling forth; and in the midst of that fire was a mouse, which died when it came out of the glowing heat' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 408). Each time, such wonders become an occasion for a lengthy discourse on inscrutable divine providence.

Constantly anticipating wonders in everyday life, al-Hujwiri is extremely careful and conservative when he discusses *karāmāt* in his book. Continually he emphasizes that saints can work wonders only if they do not violate the requirements of religious law. 'In fact, miracles (*karāmat*) and saintship are Divine gifts, not things acquired by Man, so that human actions (*kasb*) cannot become the cause of Divine guidance' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 225). The author continues:

> Accordingly, a miracle (*karāmat*) will not be manifested to a saint unless he is in a state of absence from himself and bewilderment, and unless his faculties are entirely under the control of God. While saints are with themselves and maintain the state of humanity (*bashāriyyat*), they are veiled; but when the veil is lifted they are bewildered and amazed through realizing the bounties of God. A miracle cannot be manifested except in the state of unveiledness (*kashf*), which is the rank of proximity (*qurb*); and whoever is in that state, to him worthless stones appear even as gold.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 226–7)

This passage in its own way answers the question raised at the beginning of the chapter: who became a Muslim saint and why? Al-Hujwiri's answer is obvious – well, anybody, but only by God's grace, the motives of which are kept back from mortals.

An analysis of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* is not one of the tasks of this book, all the same, however, it is worth mentioning a few words about it. Like many works of Muslim didactic literature it has been written in

response to the request of a certain Abu Sa‘id al-Hujwiri, a relative or fellow-townsman of the author:

> Explain to me the true meaning of the Path of Sufism and the nature of the ‘stations’ (*maqāmāt*) of the Sufis, and explain their doctrines and sayings, and make clear to me their mystical allegories, and the nature of Divine Love and how it manifested in human hearts, and why the intellect is unable to reach the essence thereof . . . and explain the practical aspects of Sufism which are connected with these theories.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 6–7)

Compositionally al-Hujwiri’s work is divided into two large sections: the first, introductory section, consists of 14 chapters, in which concurrent with the problems of knowledge, voluntary destitution, purity and *malāmat* (blame) in Sufism, an account is given of the brief biographies of the descendants of Hazrat ‘Ali (up to and including the sixth Imam of the Shi‘as, Jafar as-Sadiq), *Ahl as-ṣuffa*[9] (the people of the veranda) and eminent Sufi *shaikhs* of the past and the present. Of particular interest to scholars has been chapter 14, ‘Concerning the Doctrines held by the different sects of Sufis’, where two main trends, one of Baghdad and the other of Khurasan, besides the twelve existing schools, have been marked out, of which ten are approved of and two are condemned – *ḥulūlī*, the advocates of incarnation of the deity in man, and *fārisī*. Al-Hujwiri was the first to propose such a systematization, and it is not to be found in the Arabic treatises of his predecessors,[10] which gave R. Nicholson ground to wonder: did these schools actually exist or were they invented by al-Hujwiri himself seeking to systematize the teachings of Sufism? In any case these schools are not of equal worth and are not synonymous with the later Sufi fraternities, and their names are known today only to the specialists.

The object of *Kashf al- maḥjūb* is to explain the path to the Truth and to lift the veils separating the mystic from it. That is why the second section of al-Hujwiri’s work consists of chapters written in the form of *Kashf al-ḥijāb* (‘Uncovering of veils’). Behind the first veil we find *ma‘rifat* (Gnosis of God); behind the second, *tawḥīd* (Unification); behind the third, *īmān* (Faith); behind the fourth, *ṭahārat* (Purification from Foulness); behind the fifth, *ṣalāt* (Prayer) and so on right up to the last, eleventh veil, which hides *samā‘* (Audition), i.e. collective zeal with the singing of mystic verses to music.

The practice of *samāʿ* became a virtual stumbling block, the most contradictory subject of Sufi literature, around which controversies raged continually. Theologians have discussed endlessly whether the inclusion of *samāʿ* in the mystic ritual is lawful, or whether it is only *bidʿa*, a reprehensible innovation. The most lively, spectacular and entertaining part of the Sufi ritual, *samāʿ* in the first instance afforded the possibility of a quick attainment of the state of *wajd* (ecstasy). Even amongst those fraternities which practised *samāʿ*, like Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadriyya and Kubrawiyya, there was no unity of opinion on this question.

Al-Hujwiri also could not steer clear of these contradictions, or to be more exact, his attitude towards *samāʿ* reflected his evolution with the passage of time. He recollects that once on a hot day 'in the clothes of a wanderer and with untidy hair' he came to the well-known Shaikh Khwaja Muzaffar. In reply to the hospitable host's question as to what his wish was, al-Hujwiri told him that he would like to hear *samāʿ*. Khwaja Muzaffar there and then sent for a *qawwāl* (singer) and musicians. Being young and full of a neophyte's enthusiasm, al-Hujwiri was profoundly thrilled by the song and was driven into ecstasy. The Shaikh, observing the young man's reaction, warned him:

> A time will come when this music will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The influence of music only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained music has no power. Take care not to accustom yourself to this, lest it grow part of your nature and keep you back from higher things.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 171)

Khwaja Muzaffar proved to be a good foreteller – in the concluding chapter of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* al-Hujwiri speaks about *samāʿ* much more critically than in his youth. Apparently, remembering his own experience, he quotes Junaid's saying to his disciples: 'If you wish to keep your religion safe and to maintain your penitence, do not indulge, while you are young, in the audition which the Sufis practise; and when you grow old, do not let yourself be the cause of guilt in others' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 412).

But the following episode most accurately characterizes al-Hujwiri's attitude towards *samāʿ*:

> Once, when I was in Merv, one of the leaders of the Ahl-i hadīth[11] and the most celebrated of them all said to me: 'I

> have composed a work on the permissibility of audition.' I replied: 'It is a great calamity to religion that the Imam should have made lawful an amusement which is the root of all immorality'. 'If you do not hold it to be lawful', he said, 'why do you practice it?' I answered: 'Its lawfulness depends on circumstances and cannot be asserted absolutely: if audition produces a lawful effect on the mind, then it is lawful; it is unlawful if the effect is unlawful, and permissible if the effect is permissible'.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 401–2)

It is obvious that the interlocutor, having caught al-Hujwiri in hypocrisy, had put him in an awkward situation, and he simply tried to get out of it with the help of scholastic casuistry. The episode is, however, highly significant: many Sufis of later times, who had publicly condemned *samāʿ*, even the puritanically disposed Naqshbandiyya, used to secretly arrange devotional music sessions in their *khānqāhs* or private houses. In general, in the world of the mystics and the *awliyā* the conservatism of verbal and written public declarations did not rule out ecstatic behaviour, nor, for that matter, even the opposite: a mystic, depicting himself in his verses and discourses as intoxicated and almost feigning to be a *majdhūb*, could at the same time lead quite a respectable life full of strict piety.

Al-Hujwiri's attitude towards Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj was also no less contradictory than his position regarding the issue of *samāʿ*. As you will recall, the object of his innermost wishes was to secure for himself the manuscripts of Hallaj's *munājāt*. In the chapter devoted to this personified symbol of ecstatic Sufism, the author of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* endeavours to vindicate him from the common accusations of magic, *zandaqa* (heresy) and *kufr* (infidelity):

> Husayn, as long as he lived, wore the garb of piety, consisting of prayer and praise of God and continual fasts and fine sayings on the subject of Unification. If his actions were magic, all this could not possibly have proceeded from him. Consequently, they must have been miracles, and miracles are vouchsafed only to a true saint.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 152)

And there and then, as if scared of his own liberalism, al-Hujwiri takes up the point of view about Hallaj common to the moderate mystics of the Junaidiyya school: 'Although he is dear to my heart,

yet his 'path' is not soundly established on any principle, and his state is not fixed in any position, and his experiences are largely mingled with error' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 152).

In his book al-Hujwiri divides dervishes into *muqīmān* (settled) and *musāfirān* (wandering). The first had an advantage over the second because they had already completed their search and had settled down at one place in order to serve God in *khalwat* (solitude) or to pass on knowledge to their *murīds*. At the same time the wanderers had superiority over the settled as they did not burden themselves with family and property and, consequently, were less attached to the world. Besides that, the life of the *musāfir* actualized the metaphor of *ṭarīqat*: commensurate with the physically traversed path a mystic advanced further and further along the spiritual Path. For years al-Hujwiri himself belonged to this second category.

Musāfirān to a large extent depended on the hospitality and generosity of *muqīmān*, who in accordance with the existing code of relations between Sufis, provided shelter, food, clothes and many other services to the wandering dervishes. At the same time the settled dervishes in their turn endeavoured to make the visits of well-known mystics suit their own ends, in particular for the sake of consolidating their relations with the authorities but also simply in respect of the members of the community. Since the status of a mystic, who had settled down and taken root in a given locality and a particular social environment, presupposed the responsibilities of spiritual sustenance of the faithful and performance of their religious rites, *muqīmān* not infrequently tried to shift this task onto their guests.

With the passage of time the mode of life of a *musāfir* and dependence on a settled fraternity become irksome to al-Hujwiri. Let us recollect how sensitively he endured the rudeness and arrogance of the Khurasan-based dervishes, who threw melon rinds at him. He considered the need to pay for hospitality by participation in purely temporal affairs of etiquette as a humiliation and akin to penal labour.

> Certainly, it is not right that a resident dervish should take a traveller to salute worldly men or to attend their entertainments, sick-beds, and funerals; and if a resident hopes to make travellers an instrument of mendicancy (*ālat-i-gadā'i)* and conduct them from house to house, it would be better for him to refrain from serving them instead of subjecting them to humiliation. Among all the troubles and inconveniences

> that I have suffered when travelling none was worse than to be carried off time after time by ignorant servants and impudent dervishes of this sort and conducted from the house of such and such a Khwaja to the house of such and such a Dihqan, while though apparently complaisant, I felt a great dislike to go with them. I then vowed that, if ever I became resident, I would not behave towards travellers with this impropriety.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 342–3)

This transient intonation of irritation and weariness tells more about the emotional state of the author than tens of pages of his work. Over the years al-Hujwiri obviously became tired, and began losing his enthusiastic interest in everything, almost without exception. This enthusiasm had been very characteristic of him in his youth, as had his constantly optimistic appraisals of the people and social environment in which he lived. In marked contrast these now became all the more critical and 'sober'. In the foreword to *Kashf al-maḥjūb* he was the first in the long line of mystics who followed him to express his pessimism about the state of contemporary Sufism:

> Know that in this our time the science of Sufism is obsolete, especially in this country. The whole people is occupied with following its lusts and has turned its back on the path of quietism, while '*ulama* and those who pretend to learning have formed a conception of Sufism which is quite contrary to its fundamental principles . . . Everyone makes pretensions, none attain to reality. The disciples, neglecting their ascetic practices, indulge in idle thoughts, which they call 'contemplation'.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 7)

Each generation of mystics has regarded the state of Sufism contemporary to it as decadent. Complaints about profanation or emasculation of esoteric knowledge are the 'commonplace' of the entire didactic and hagiographic literature.[12] This decadence is always contrasted with a certain 'golden age' of Sufism, which is gradually expanded to encompass further centuries and generations, depending on which age the writer himself belongs to. Thus, for the spiritual descendants of al-Hujwiri, in particular, for the Great Chishtiyya *shaikhs*, living in the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, he himself as well as his contemporaries belonged to such

a 'golden age'. In turn, for the Sufis inhabiting the empire of the Great Mughals, the 'golden age' was much more prolonged, because it even included the epoch of al-Hujwiri and several centuries of the Delhi Sultanate. This fluctuating image of the 'golden age', the image of the bygone glory, reaches its apogee in the second half of the last century, when the entire preceding history of Islam in India is painted in idealized nostalgic colours and gives a powerful impulse to the development of Muslim revivalism.

Al-Hujwiri's autobiography convinces the reader that his impression of the impoverishment of Sufism was characterized more by conventionality rather than by objectivity. And indeed where does the question of impoverishment arise, if in Khurasan alone he met three hundred *shaikhs* 'who had such mystical endowments that a single man of them would have been enough for the whole world. This is due to the fact that the sun of love and the fortune of the Sufi Path is in the ascendant in Khurasan' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 174).

The author of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* indefatigably moves from place to place throughout the Muslim world, in which the *shaikhs* and dervishes have already assimilated each nook and corner. In the bustling towns of Iraq and Syria, in the almost inaccessible mountain villages of Jabal al-Buttam and Bait al-Jinn, in the steppes of Turkistan and on the shores of the Caspian, everywhere he meets other members of his fraternity, at times celebrated, now and then nameless, but equal masters of the much trumpeted *ars moriendi*, which, for sure, did not seem to be as 'melancholic' to them as it did to Hermann Hesse.

The reasons which brought al-Hujwiri to Lahore (which he calls Lahawur[13]) are not known to us. We only know the main circumstances which compelled him to settle down there. In his book the author drops a hint that he found himself in Lahore not on his own accord: 'I could not possibly set down more than this, my books having been left at Ghazna[14] – may God guard it! – while I myself had become a captive among uncongenial folk (*darmiyān-i nā-jinsān giriftār mānde*) in the district of Lahawur, which is a dependency of Multan' (al-Hujwiri 1926: 21). On the other hand why should a native of Ghazna not try his luck in such a town, which in 1031 became the capital of the empire of the Ghaznavides? Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (died 1030), who had annexed Lahore to his own empire, never lived in it and was not at all interested in this godforsaken small town in Punjab. He entrusted its government to his favourite Malik Ayaz, who, as the local tradition says, erected the rampart around the city in just one night. During the reign of Mahmud's descendants,

in particular during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim (1059–99) Lahore acquired fame in the subcontinent as a major centre of Muslim culture and scholarship. Suffice it to say that it was in Lahore that al-Hujwiri's younger contemporaries, the famous poets Abul Faraj Runi and Ma'sud Sa'd-i Salman lived and created their works in Persian.

The author of *Kashf al-maḥjūb* was not the first Muslim mystic to settle down in Lahore.[15] Having taken up residence in the western outskirts of the old city, near Bhatti Darwaza gate, he started teaching numerous disciples, built a mosque, which has not survived to the present day (and by the side of which he was subsequently buried), and worked on his book, which brought him everlasting fame. Nothing reliable is known about his subsequent life in Lahore.

Soon after al-Hujwiri's death his *mazār* became the favourite place of seclusion and meditation for his disciples and followers. The initial construction of the tomb is ascribed to the already mentioned Sultan Ibrahim Ghaznavi as well as to a private person, Hajji Nur Muhammad Faqir, who supposedly erected a dome over the burial-vault. It was Emperor Akbar, during whose reign Lahore became the Mughal capital, who finally completed the construction of the architectural complex of the *dargāh*. However, the tomb continued constantly to be reconstructed and expanded till recently. Its spacious arched *riwāq*, where there is a mosque and halls for *majālis*, has been built in our times, and the massive silver doors are a gift of the last Shah of Iran.

With transformation into a popular saint, al-Hujwiri, as usually happens, lost his original name and acquired the nickname Data Ganjbakhsh, consisting of two synonymous parts: *dātā* (Sanskrit for 'giver', or 'generous') and *ganjbakhsh* (Persian for 'generous', or 'lavish'). However, in everyday life he is called by a still shorter name – *Dātā Ṣāḥib*. Combination of synonyms of Sanskrit and Persian origin in the saint's nickname gives an indication of the social environment of his devotees as well as of the type of sainthood: Punjabi Hindus venerated him as much as the Muslims, and boundless generosity was considered to be the peculiarity of his *baraka*, according to which Data Sahib met any wish whatsoever of the suppliant.

Dara Shikoh, who often visited the tomb of the saint, has written: 'It is common knowledge that here is satisfied the requirement of everyone, who in the course of forty nights from Thursday to Friday or on forty days consecutively circumambulates this venerated tomb' (Dara Shikoh 1965: 148). The inscription on the saint's tomb also says more or less the same:

Bar āstān-i tū har kas rasīd maṭlab yāft
Rawā madār ki man nāumīd bar gardam.
Everyone who reached your threshold got his wish.
Do not let me return disappointed.

Because people supplicated Data Sahib for highly different reasons he is most venerated in South Asia as a type of universal saint, not connected with a particular social group or motivation of devotion – a general saint, 'for all seasons' as it were. By virtue of the universality of his *baraka* Data Sahib became the first and foremost patron saint of Lahore. In this role he outshines other patron saints of this town such as the wandering *malāmatī* poet Madho Lal Husain and the already mentioned preceptor of the Mughal elite, Miyan Mir. Over the years Data Sahib came to be regarded as a peculiar elder, a doyen of the corps of saints.

Thus, Dara Shikoh writes that 'he surpasses all the saints of India and no new saint can set foot on this land without first obtaining his spiritual permission' (Dara Shikoh 1965: 149). To a certain extent these words are true, for the path of numerous mystics, arriving in India from Afghanistan and Central Asia, either started from Lahore or passed through it. Moving along the road, connecting the old capital Lahore with the new ones – Delhi and Agra, a pious person simply could not avoid the tomb of the elder of the Indian saints. The spiritual energy emanating from *Dātā Darbār* (this is what traditionally the saint's tomb is called) shaped the new generations of *awliyā*. Here at different times Mu'inuddin Chishti, Baba Farid and Miyan Mir performed *murāqaba*; leading the life of a mendicant, Madho Lal Husain actually lived in *Dātā Darbār*; mystics of Punjab Sultan Bahu (1631–91) and Bullhe Shah (1680–1752) mentioned him in their verses. Finally, contemporary tradition says that the idea of a separate state for Muslims in the subcontinent actually occurred to Muhammad Iqbal in *Dātā Darbār* (Goulding 1925: 2).

Iqbal, in spite of his somewhat snobbish dislike for *pirism* and popular religion, has done justice in full measure to Data Sahib, depicting in the poem 'The Secrets of the Self' (*Asrār-i khūdī*, 1915) his 'possible meeting'[16] with another eminent saint of the subcontinent, Mu'inuddin Chishti (Iqbal used his another title Pir-i Sanjar). Despite the abstraction of reality and historical facts, typical for the poetics of the genre of *mathnawī*, Iqbal quite comprehensively answers the question of why al-Hujwiri was venerated as so influential a South Asian saint:

> The saint of Hujwir was venerated by the peoples
> And Pir-i-Sanjar visited his tomb as a pilgrim.
> With ease he broke down the mountain-barriers
> And sowed the seed of Islam in India.
> The age of Omar was restored by his godliness.
> The fame of the Truth was exalted by his words.
> He was a guardian of the honour of the Koran.
> The house of Falsehood fell in ruins at his gaze.
> The dust of the Punjab was brought to life by his breath,
> Our dawn was made splendid by his sun.
> He was a lover, and withal, a courier of Love:
> The secrets of Love shone forth from his brow.
> I will tell a story of his perfection
> And enclose a whole rose-bed in a single bud.
> (Iqbal 1977: 95–6)

Thus Iqbal lays emphasis on al-Hujwiri's exceptional role at the initial stage of the Islamization of India: he 'sowed the seed of Islam in India'; 'our dawn', i.e. the dawn of Islam in the subcontinent, 'was made splendid by his sun'; at his gaze fell in ruins 'the house of Falsehood', i.e. the Hindu polytheism and other native religious beliefs. Then Iqbal dwells on the Sunni godliness of the saint, owing to which 'the age of Omar', the second righteous caliph of the Muslims, 'was restored'. The Sunni tradition in general depicted Omar ('Umar) as an ideal ruler and as a godly ascetic, who laid down numerous religious and legal injunctions of Islam, in particular the practice of *Ḥajj*. Reference to the authority of Omar's personality and the line 'He was a guardian of the honour of the Koran' testify to the Sunni conservatism of the saint, to his allegiance to the religious law. The verse 'The fame of the Truth was exalted by his words', probably alludes to *Kashf al-maḥjūb*. The spiritual services of the true mystic have been mentioned in the couplet: 'He was a lover, and withal, a courier of love, / The secrets of love shone forth from his brow.'

Finally the line 'The dust of the Punjab was brought to life by his breath' records Data Sahib's role in the genesis of the cult of the Punjabi *awliyā*, for the image of the 'living dust' or 'living ashes' *(k͟hāk-i zinda)* is associated by hagiographic literature with the remains of the saints and with the dust of their tombs. Further on in the poem Iqbal calls the saint 'The wise director, in whose nature / Love had allied mercy with wrath', i.e. the aspects of Divine beauty and grace (*jamāl)* on the one hand and of Divine majesty and wrath

(*jalāl)* on the other. And further on in the same section of the poem Iqbal puts in al-Hujwiri's mouth his concept of an active, energetic personality *khūdī*, the revelation of whose secrets is the main purpose of his *mathnawī*.

Obviously Iqbal was impressed by the figure of al-Hujwiri as well as by the type of sainthood personified by him,[17] since *sukr* (sobriety), envisaging absolute self-control and moderation, obedience to religious law, eulogized by the poet, and, what is still more important, absence of 'vedantic' syncretism, which he rejected and to which he attributed the excesses of ecstatic Sufism and the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of Being), were inherent in the convictions and world view of the author of *Kashf al- maḥjūb*.

Dātā Darbār has not changed much since the days Iqbal used to visit it: in the second half of the twentieth century the *dargāh* was repaired more than once but it was not reconstructed. In pictures and coloured photographs the dome of the tomb is shown to be a rich emerald colour. In reality, from a distance it seems to be a moving and swaying white-grey mass with islets of green, since from the spire up to the drum it is covered completely with a living carpet of pigeons. When the courtyard of the tomb is not crowded one can hear how the pigeons animatedly coo, as if holding a 'conversation of birds' (*manṭiq aṭ-ṭair*), which, by 'Attar's happy initiative, became a metaphor of the mystics' esoteric and 'obscure' language.

A multitude of pigeons is a characteristic sign of the most important monuments of the Muslim world, for example, of Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani's tomb in Baghdad and of the Afghan complex Mazar-i Sharif. The prototypes of these birds, of course, are the *kabūtarān-i ḥaram* (forbidden, i.e. sacred, pigeons) of Mecca, symbolizing the prohibition of any violence against any living being in the sanctum sanctorum of Islam. In accordance with the *āyats*, 'And We made the House (in Mecca) a resort for mankind and a sanctuary' (2: 125) and 'Have We not established for them a sure sanctuary?', on the sacred territory of Ka'ba, particularly during *Ḥajj*, absolute safety is guaranteed to the people, the animals and even to the plants. This prohibition, and also the custom of breeding and feeding pigeons, was in the course of time also extended to those places of pilgrimage connected with the cult of the saints. And the pilgrims themselves, dressed in white *iḥrām* (the robe worn by pilgrims), were often compared with the 'prohibited pigeons'.

This connotation became so entrenched in the consciousness of the Muslims that when in 1987 more than six hundred persons, performing *Ḥajj* suffered in clashes with the Saudi forces of law

and order, they were called *kabūtarān-i khūnīnbāl-i ḥaram* (the blood bathed pigeons of the sanctuary) by the Iranian press (Gol Mohammadi 1988). By the same token, the multitude of pigeons on the dome of *Dātā Darbār* is also a metaphor for the abundance of pilgrims.

The domed cupola design of *Dātā Darbār* is typical of the pre-Mughal Muslim architecture of South Asia: while erecting the cupolas topping a square building, an intermediate form of squinches or arched transitional supports was used. These squinches are the arches built diagonally across the corners of a square to create this transition from the square to the spherical base of the dome. However, the technique of erecting domes on squinches did not prove strong enough when the domes were excessively high or had too large a radius: such structures could not withstand natural calamities. From the sixteenth century onwards the Indian architects changed over to a new design of domed structures, developed in the Timurid Herat and introduced to the subcontinent by the Mughals. This was the system of intersecting arches and shield-shaped transitional supports. These arches reduced almost to half the bay of the dome resting on them, which strengthened the design of the building (Pugachenkova 1963: 127).

The décor of the dome interior, covered with stylized arabesque ornamentation, is astonishingly rich. The frieze under the dome is decorated with a many-tier ligature of *thulth* script. Right under the dome there is an elevated cenotaph, surrounded by a marble balustrade with stone flower vases on consoles. As in other tombs the sepulchre is covered with a brocade coverlet, entirely laid over with garlands of rose petals. There is no access to the cenotaph: it is enclosed, almost up to the level of the frieze, in a tall marble octagon with depressed scalloped arches on all sides, of which the top is decorated with open work carving on stone.

One part of the arches is blocked with fine marble lattice. The other part contains observation windows, through which the pilgrims can contemplate the sepulchre. The upper panels of the octagon are inlaid with inscriptions in Persian.[18] Arched openings are curtained, as if fringed, with flower garlands, 'consecrated' by having come in contact with Data Sahib's tomb. Having elbowed their way to the arches, the pilgrims stroke and kiss these garlands, thereby physically partaking of the saint's *baraka*. Essentially the ritual of Data Sahib's veneration is limited to circumambulations of the octagon, accompanied by the recitation of the *Fātiḥa*, offering of flowers and distribution of *sadaqa*, which testifies to the 'moderation' of his cult,

not violating the external forms of Sunni piety. The social composition of the saint's devotees is extremely varied: as always, the urban lower strata and beggars predominate but there are also richly dressed women of well-to-do families, visiting *Dātā Darbār* accompanied by escorts.

However, prejudices, ambitions and discords of the mortals are no longer going to disturb the eternal peace of the scholar saint, whose remarkable work was, in his own words, intended 'for polishers of hearts which are infected by the veil of "clouding" but in which the substance of the light of the Truth is existent' (al-Hujwiri 1926: 5).

3

THE OLD MAN OF AJMER

A pious erudition, gentle contemplative quietude, a concentrated and secluded spiritual life, typical of so many Sufis, was not necessarily the only ideal image of a saint during his lifetime, in the eyes of ordinary people. Undertaking a journey into himself (since the Path to the Absolute in the end turns out to be a journey to the very depth of one's own ego), 'polishing the mirror of his heart', a mystic-introvert could become a cult figure of popular Islam. This could only occur where there could be some sort of easy transformation into an accessible ideal, for example, the transformation of the scholar–theoretician al-Hujwiri into the people's benefactor, Data Ganjbakhsh.

Later in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the superficial religiosity of the newly converted social environment, while still clinging to a quite deep-rooted faith, with its extremes, fears and ecstasies, called into being the most common type of saint: energetic intercessor and extrovert, accessible to a great number of people. In other words, it was the ideal of a saint–social worker. Subsequent centuries of Indian history introduced hardly anything new into this romance of sainthood, since the types of saints, as the saints themselves, reside outside the limits of time and are translated from generation to generation.

To be more exact, mass consciousness of the faithful made quite contradictory demands in respect of the image of a saint: on the one hand, *manāqib* depict saints as *zāhids* (ascetics), who had renounced all worldly things and had done away with all worldly bonds (*inkār al-kasb*), on the other hand they portray them in the very midst of people's lives, actively intervening in the course of historical events and responding to the worldly passions (*shahawāt*) of ordinary people. That is why most of the South Asian *awliyā* combine in their person both types of saints: being hermits withdrawn from present-

day reality and at the same time being men well-versed in temporal affairs and regulators of people's fates.

Towards the end of existence of the Delhi Sultanate, the social work, enormous in terms of the volume of help rendered and the range of social strata covered, which was carried out by saints and the *ṭarīqas* connected with them, started prevailing over the task of proselytizing and providing spiritual sustenance for the faithful, which was typical of the earlier period. Help was given by way of money and food to thousands of indigent people, the resources of the *awqāf* and offerings of private persons being utilized. Constant intercession before a temporal power on behalf of the disgraced and aggrieved, and intervention in political conflicts, fraught with the threat of internecine war among the nobility or destruction and ruin of some group or other of the social environment, substantially changed the notions about *wilāyat*, leading both to the further consolidation of the institution of saints in public life of the period and to its steady secularization. It was also at this time, in the fifteenth century, that the role and professional and group differentiation among the South Asian saints finally takes shape. This was brought about by the purely utilitarian requirements of direct practical help on the part of the saint, which was discussed in Chapter 1.

The main contribution to the creation of the social image of the saint as an intercessor for the unfortunate and consoler of the distressed was made by the aforementioned great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya order, who had set the example of an extraordinarily active life. In their broad-based and multifaceted activity, lyrically delightful mysticism, full of sentimental tender emotion, paradoxically existed side by side with the programmatic practicality of spiritual preceptorship and with ideas of universal service, manifested in the first instance in the social adaptation of neophytes and in material support for the poorest strata of the population. In spite of all this the *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya fraternity, in accordance with the Sufi principle of *khalwat dar anjuman* ('seclusion in the midst of the people'), constantly observed strict asceticism, experienced ecstasies, visions and revelations, peculiar to true clairvoyants. In other words, living and working in the midst of laymen, they themselves contrived to avoid worldly temptations.

Although the Chishtiyya *silisla* had its origins outside South Asia, in Eastern Khurasan, during the times of the Delhi Sultanate a fraternity of the same name took shape and developed exclusively in the territory of India, becoming, side by side with the Suhrawardiyya order, the most popular and widespread *ṭarīqa*. The founder of the

silsila, Iraqi mystic Abu Ishaq ash-Shami (who died in 1097), settled down in the small town of Chisht at a distance of 100 kilometres from Herat (now in Afghanistan) and that is where he founded a *khānqāh*. The fraternity itself later took its name from this toponym. Ash-Shami traced his spiritual genealogy to the Prophet and Caliph ʻAli through Hasan al-Basri and Ibrahim bin Adham who were eminent mystics of the first centuries of Islam. Its affiliation to the Mesopotamian school of Junaid determined the moderate Sunni nature of the preaching and activity of the first Chishtis.

However, by the end of the twelfth century Chisht had already ceased to be a peaceful or favourable place for Sufis. Together with the entire neighbouring region, it had turned into an arena for the fierce struggle of the Ghorids, rulers of the principality of Ghor (between Ghazna and Herat), for superiority over the other Turkish clans. Apparently, that is why the eighth *khalīfa* in the chain of succession of the Chishtis[1] and the true founder of the fraternity, Muʻinuddin Sijzi (1142–1236), preferred to move from the capital of Ghorids in Firozkuh, aspirant to the fame of new Ghazna, all the way to Rajasthan, to the southern frontiers of Muʻizzuddin Ghori's[2] empire.

Historical information about the early period of Khwaja Muʻinuddin Sijzi's life has not survived to this day. Later hagiographic sources, for example, 'The Virtues of Saints' (*Siyar al-awliyā*) of Amir Khurd or 'The Notes about the Pious' (*Akhbār al-akhyār*) of ʻAbdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi, compiled several centuries after the death of the founder of the Chishtiyya fraternity, are based on the *malfūẓāt* ascribed to him, but pass over in silence as to the authenticity of their *isnād*. From Muʻinuddin's pre-Indian past only this much is known: that he was born in Sistan (or Sijistan, hence his *nisba* 'Sijzi') and became an orphan when he was fifteen years old.

He lived a life of idyllic simplicity on a scanty income from a garden and a watermill, inherited from his father, until a wandering *majdhūb*, Ibrahim Qunduzi, walked into his garden. Tradition goes on to narrate a typical *silsila* situation of spiritual awakening for the Chishtiyya: having chewed some sesame seeds the *majdhūb* put them into the youth's mouth, as a result of which he immediately felt the irresistible call of the Path. The next day Muʻinuddin sold the garden and watermill, distributed all the money among local dervishes and left Sistan for ever.

Having spent several years in Samarqand and Bukhara, where he studied religious subjects, Muʻinuddin reached Harwan, a suburb of Nishapur, where he became a *murīd* of Chishti *shaikh* ʻUthman

Harwani, whom he served over a period of twenty years. Having obtained from the preceptor the garb of the fraternity (*khirqa*) and a prayer rug (*sajjāda*) as a token of an inheritance of bliss, Mu'inuddin set off to Baghdad, where, according to certain hagiographic sources, he called upon the 'great intercessor' 'Abdul Qadir Jilani.[3] In the course of the same journey he had the honour of spending some time in the company of Najmuddin Kubra, the founder of the Kubrawiyya fraternity and two of the most famous relatives in the world of Sufism – Najibuddin Suhrawardi, the spiritual founder of the Suhrawardiyya *silsila*, and his nephew Shihabuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar, the eponym of this order. It is worth noting here that the famous treatises on questions of ethics and the practice of Sufism – 'The Ethos of the Novices' (*Ādāb al-murīdīn*) by Najibuddin and 'The Benefits of Knowledge' (*'Awārif al-ma'ārif*) by Shihabuddin Abu Hafs – became normative manuals for Chishtis, who had not created their own didactic literature.

The subsequent wanderings of Mu'inuddin Chishti in Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan by their line of travel resemble al-Hujwiri's journey described above, but, alas, without the commentaries of the traveller himself they are not of much interest. As was the custom among dervishes (*musāfirān*), he moved from one sacred tomb to the other, having visited the sepulchre of Abu Sa'id bin Abul Khair Mayhani already known to us from *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, the tomb of 'Abdullah al-Ansari in Herat, the grave of Shaikh Nasiruddin in Astrabad and many other not so well-known *mazārs*. On the way he visited the *khānqāhs* of contemporaries famous for their spiritual services, in particular that of Abu Sa'id Tabrizi (*murshid* of the eminent saint of Bengal Jalaluddin Tabrizi) and also that of Yusuf Hamadani, one of the founders of *silsila-i khwājagān*. On and off he brought Shi'as to the lap of Sunni orthodoxy, and set orthodox Sunnis on the path of *taṣawwuf*.[4] At last Mu'inuddin reached Ghazna, where the circuit of his wanderings came to a close: the Prophet appearing in a dream sent him to India to convert non-believers.

Like the majority of his predecessors, Mu'inuddin arrived in India through Lahore, part of the Ghori domains since the year 1185; this historic moment for the destiny of South Asian Sufism has been depicted by Muhammad Iqbal in his *mathnawī*. The date of passage of the future saint through Lahore can be determined quite easily: most of the historians, including Abul Fazl in 'The Akbarian Codes' (*Ā'in-i Akbarī*),[5] affirm that this happened in the year when Mu'izzuddin Ghori inflicted the final defeat on the famous hero of Indian history, folklore and literature, Prithviraj Chauhan III, who

was at the head of the confederation of Rajput princes. The crushing defeat of Prithviraj's army near Taraori (to the north of Delhi) and his execution took place in 1192. This means that Mu'inuddin Sijzi arrived in India when he was fifty years old and in no way could be called 'a youth from Merv' as he is referred to by Iqbal. Going by the same chronology he could not have met Prithviraj, nor could he have engaged in a prolonged struggle with him. However, hagiographic tradition pays no heed to chronology and that is why Mu'inuddin's spiritual victory over Prithviraj, whom the Muslim literature names Pithaura Ra'i, constitutes one of the brightest episodes of the saint's life.

Although Mu'inuddin became the founder of the most humane and peaceful of all the Indian fraternities, he himself was a mystic of the earlier type – a champion of faith, placing the task of propagation of Islam above everything else, intolerant of followers of other faiths and merciless to opponents. It is true that the later Chishti tradition endeavoured in every way possible to soften the image of the saint and was never tired of eulogizing his boundless charity and selfless love for all fellow men. He is said to have claimed that: 'The highest form of devotion is to redress the misery of those in distress, to fulfill the needs of the helpless, and to feed the hungry' (Nizami 1961: 97) – a phrase which became the credo of the Chishtiyya fraternity. In this sense Mu'inuddin was a follower of Bayazid Bistami, who had in his time declared that a Sufi should be endowed with 'a generosity like that of the ocean, a mildness like that of the sun, and a modesty like that of the earth' (Schimmel 1980: 24). However, all this programmatic charity is relevant to the last period of the saint's life in Ajmer, when Khwaja Mu'inuddin's position in Indian society was sufficiently strong and he himself had finally won the respect of the authorities and veneration of the believers.

The beginning of the Khwaja's Indian venture seemed to be more clouded. The fact that he felt the hostility of the 'territory of war', which India in the twelfth century happened to be for a Muslim who had lived throughout his life on the 'territory of Islam', was also noted by Iqbal in his *mathnawī*:

> A young man, cypress-tall,
> Came from the town of Merv to Lahore.
> He went to see the venerable saint,
> That the sun might dispel his darkness.
> 'I am hemmed in,' he said, 'by foes;
> I am as a glass in the midst of stones.

Do thou teach me, O sire of heavenly rank,
How to lead my life amongst enemies!'
(Iqbal 1977: 96–7)

With the exception of the image of 'a young man, cypress-tall', which remains on Iqbal's conscience, the poet is right in all other respects: indifference of the authorities, hostility of the '*ulamā* and envy of his Sufi brothers tormented Khwaja in Lahore and Delhi as well as during the first years of his life in Ajmer. Thus, during his sojourn in Lahore, where Mu'inuddin had found shelter in *Dātā Darbār*, he evoked the envious hostility of Shaikh Husain Zanjani,[6] the eldest Lahore mystic. Later in Delhi he was accorded quite a cold reception by the powerful *shaikh ul-Islām* Najmuddin Sughra. The first years of life in Ajmer, if one can trust certain hagiographic sources, were marked by tense face-to-face between the Khwaja and the Rajputs.

Mu'inuddin Sijzi had arrived in India at a turning-point in its political history: defeat of Prithviraj III had made it possible for the Ghorids to capture the territory formerly ruled by Rajputs, in particular, Ajmer. Qutbuddin Aibek, a military leader from amongst Turkish slaves (*ghulāms*), became the vicegerent of the conquered lands. It was he who occupied Delhi in 1193, which had remained under the rule of Rajputs even after their defeat near Taraori. After Mu'izzuddin Ghori's death in 1206 Qutbuddin Aibek proclaimed himself as the Sultan of all the Ghorids' possessions in India and made Delhi the capital of his state. The dynasty of Ghulams founded by him was then in power for a whole century. It was this event, witnessed by the saint, which marked the birth of the Delhi Sultanate.

Khwaja Mu'inuddin did not stay long in Lahore and Delhi: he followed the traditions of his predecessors belonging to the *silsila*, who had chosen as their abode not the big cities of the contemporary Muslim world but an out-of-the-way place called Chisht. Probably one of the reasons why Khwaja's choice fell upon Ajmer was the proximity of Puśkar, an important centre of pilgrimage for Hindus, situated at a distance of only eleven kilometres from this town, giving the ardent missionary the opportunity to convert to Islam the most persistent of infidel 'heathens'.

Situated on the bank of the artificial lake Anasagar and surrounded by the Arawali hills, Ajmer derived its name from the rock *Ajay merū* ('Forbidding Hill'), where Rajput rulers of the clan of Chauhans had erected Taragarh ('Starry Fort'). In earlier times there had been a Jain monastery at the foot of the hill, but this was destroyed by Mu'izzuddin Ghori's troops and only a pillared hall survived. Out of

this hall of pillars, placed one over the other in twos and, in the arch of the portal, even in threes, and using elements of the original temple décor, the first Indian Jami' Masjid (congregational mosque) was built. It was completed in such a record period of time that this was reflected not only in its name, Arhai din ka jhonpra ('The two-and-a-half day hut'), but also in the legends about the involvement of supernatural powers in its construction. Actually the work at the mosque lasted considerably longer: its erection began during the lifetime of Mu'izzuddin Ghori and was completed during the reign of his successor. However, as this one was assembled out of ready-made blocks and parts, like its contemporary Quwwat al-Islam mosque in Delhi, the time taken for its construction was much less than usual.

Since at the beginning the Khwaja had taken up residence in Taragarh fort he could probably watch daily how the mosque below the hill was growing. It symbolized the expanding presence of Islam in the land of recalcitrant and insurgent Rajputs. The Khwaja's subsequent life in Ajmer can be looked at as if in two planes: in a quasi-historical plane, reflected in the '*Siyar al-awliyā*' of Amir Khurd, in the 'The Virtues of the Gnostics' (*Siyar al-'ārifīn*) of Jamali Kanboh and 'The Flowerbed of the Pious' (*Gulzār-i abrār*) of Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari and in a fantastic-legendary plane which has been recorded in the hagiographic collection of 'Ali Asghar Chishti 'The Matchless Jewels' (*Jawāhir-i farīdī*, 1623).

If we adhere to those versions which are, even if only outwardly, close to historical facts, then the Khwaja was respectfully met in Ajmer, which had become a part of Qutbuddin Aibek's empire, by Sayyid Husain Mashhadi, the military vicegerent (*dārogha*) there. (As a matter of fact that is exactly why the Khwaja took up quarters in the fort: it was also the vicegerent's residence.) Indeed, it was with the help of this vicegerent, who had become his staunch devotee, that he built the *khānqāh*, where together with his disciple Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori (who died in 1276), he used to convert Hindus to Islam and train *murīds*. In the year 1209 the Khwaja, till then strictly observing celibacy, took two wives, one of whom was the *dārogha*'s niece and the other the daughter of a Rajput chieftain, who had been taken prisoner during military operations and had fallen to the saint's lot as a war trophy. From these marriages three sons were born, and also a daughter, Hafiza (also called Bibi Hafiz Jamal[7]), with a marked inclination for mysticism. The years spent in wanderings were left behind and now the Khwaja lived in Ajmer almost without a break, even as it befits the *muqīmān* Sufis.

His means of subsistence was a village in the suburbs of Ajmer, which was owned by him by the right of *iḥyā*. This was the name in Muslim agrarian law for abandoned wasteland in almost inaccessible and infertile regions, the ownership right of which was given to anyone who undertook to cultivate it. Hence the name of the form of land-ownership, which comes from the Arabic word *iḥyā*, meaning the act of restoration to life or resurrection. The local *muqṭa*ʻ,[8] entertaining an attitude of animosity towards the saint, insisted that he should produce the Sultan's *farmān* (decree) for ownership of this village, and in the beginning of 1220s the Khwaja, at his family's request, had to go to Delhi for the second time.

In the capital he stayed in Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's house, where, as we may recall, people were fed only with stale bread. The host and the guest had got acquainted with each other much earlier, in Baghdad, where Qutbuddin had become the Khwaja's disciple and then he had set off to India in his footsteps. Wishing to render a service to his *murshid*, Qutbuddin solicited for an audience with Sultan Iltutmish. Since Chishtis, generally speaking, did not humour the high and mighty of this world by their visits, and Qutbuddin in particular persistently avoided Iltutmish's favours, his arrival in the palace as a suppliant made a strong impression on the Sultan. The sought-for *farmān* was immediately issued and the high-handed *muqṭa*ʻ was punished for the trouble given to the saint. The respect shown by the Sultan to Muʻinuddin in his absence had its effect even on the attitude of the ʻ*ulamā* of the capital towards him; in any case *shaikh ul-Islām* Najmuddin Sughra, who had treated the Khwaja quite negligently during his first sojourn in Delhi, this time gave him an enthusiastic welcome.

However, the Khwaja did not yield to *shaikh ul-Islām*'s kindness since he used to maltreat his *khalīfa* Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and threatened to take the latter along with him to Ajmer. The inhabitants of the city with Iltutmish at their head came out to see off the saint and his disciple, picking up dust from under their feet as an invaluable relic. Touched by such a manifestation of mass veneration the Khwaja relented and allowed Qutbuddin to remain in Delhi.

As we see, in this biography there is nothing supernatural, and this is how it differs strikingly from Muʻinuddin Chishti's legendary life, the sources of which were the motifs of Indo-Muslim fantastic folklore. Contrary to historical facts, the tradition of Chishtis, including Nizamuddin Awliya, asserted that when the Khwaja arrived in Ajmer, Pithaura Ra'i was still the ruler there and he supposedly fiercely resisted the saint's presence in the town. Going by *Jawāhir-i farīdī*,

Prithviraj's biased attitude towards the saint was conditioned by his mother's prediction. She had had a prophetic dream foreboding her son's death following his meeting with the Khwaja. The saint's 'verbal portrait', recreated from the clairvoyant mother's words, was distributed among all the guardsmen of Ajmer and the appearance of each and every stranger entering the town was compared with it.

When the Khwaja with his retinue reached the main gate of Ajmer and his companions made for Anasagar lake in order to perform ablution before prayers, the Raja's armed soldiers blocked their way. Then the Khwaja asked the guardsmen to let him fill just one pitcher and as soon as the pitcher touched the surface of the lake all the springs of water in an otherwise drought-afflicted Ajmer dried up.

In order to deal the final blow to the flabbergasted Rajputs, the Khwaja brought down on their heads a series of *karāmāt*, among which there was, for example, a temple idol who came to life and recited the *Kalima* – the Muslim affirmation of faith – to the astounded brahmans. Pithaura Ra'i directed his prime minister Jaipal, additionally holding the post of court magician, to restrain the stranger. In the best traditions of Indo-Muslim fairy tales Jaipal sent an army of fire-spitting dragons against the Khwaja, but the Khwaja drew a magic circle around himself and under its cover annihilated the evil spirits.

The Raja had to acknowledge defeat and to beg the saint for indulgence. The saint at last let mercy season justice and restored the supply of water to the inhabitants of Ajmer, after which many Rajputs, including ashamed Jaipal, adopted Islam on their own accord. Pithaura Ra'i himself refused to renounce his faith and then the Khwaja uttered the sacramental phrase: 'We have taken Pithaura alive and have handed him over to the army of Islam' (Rizvi 1986: 114). The saint's prophecy soon came true: according to the hagiography of the Chishtis, Mu'izzuddin Ghori's troops invaded India and Prithviraj was defeated in battle, blinded and then killed as a punishment for disrespect to the saint and for obstinacy in infidelity.

It is interesting that the version that maintains that the Khwaja lived in Ajmer during the rule of Prithviraj and was persecuted by hostile Brahmans has found its way even into modern research literature:

> From Lahore Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti went to Delhi and then to Ajmer, which was ruled by Ra'i Prithvi Raj. One cannot think without admiration of this man, almost alone, living among people, who considered the least contact with a Muslim as defilement. Sometimes he was refused

> water to drink. In the torrid climate of Rajputana this was the hardest punishment one can imagine. The high-caste priests demanded of the Raja of Ajmer that he should banish the Khwaja, whose influence had begun to make itself felt among the lower classes of the place. The Raja sent the order of expulsion through Ram Deo, head of the priests of Ajmer. Legend relates that in approaching the Khwaja, Ram Deo was so much impressed by his personality that he became, from that moment, a faithful disciple of the Khwaja and spent the rest of his life in the service of the helpless and downtrodden.
>
> (Husain 1959: 37)

As can be seen, this is only a rehash of the legends from *Jawāhir-i farīdī* with fantasy purged from it.

The portrait of the saint, quick to anger or to retaliate, painted by hagiographic legends, differs considerably from the textbook image of Mu'inuddin Sijzi as the 'ocean of charity' and the 'sun of compassion', of a man who corresponds to the very name of the saint (*Mu'īn* – 'one who gives help, renders assistance'). Generally speaking, unlike Data Ganjbakhsh, the individuality of the founder of the Chishtiyya order escapes the modern researcher, being wholly levelled by legends. It has already been mentioned that the *malfūẓāt* ascribed to him are entirely inauthentic, and reference to him in chronicles goes back to the end of the fourteenth century when he had already started being venerated as a most eminent saint in India. He has not left any doctrinal works and verses, which, in spite of all the unreliability of Sufi poetry as a historical source, could at least clarify aspects of his personality.

Probably the image of the Old Man of Ajmer finally took shape posthumously, after his demise on the sixth day of the month of Rajab (16 March) in 1236, even up to the present time marked as his '*urs*. One thing is beyond doubt, Mu'inuddin Sijzi was no coward: during the years when Islam had only just started consolidating its power in India, he preferred to be engaged in missionary activity not in Lahore or Delhi, where the armies of the Sultan were stationed, providing at least some guarantee of safety, and where there existed a community of Muslims, even if small, but in the hostile ambience of the dashing and bellicose Rajputs.

The saint in his lifetime had a passionate attachment, which imparts character to his pleasant but impersonal image and determines the peculiarity of the subsequent tradition of the order founded by him:

he unreservedly liked *samā‘* and considered ‘audition’ to be one of the main instruments of spiritual transformation of a mystic. The defence of *samā’,* beginning with Mu‘inuddin, which permeates the entire literature of the Chishtis, on the one hand became a watershed between them and the competing Suhrawardiyya fraternity, and on the other, put them against the ‘*ulamā*. On the saint’s order Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori compiled a ‘Treatise on audition’ (*Risāla-i samā‘*), where he formulated the theory, later developed by other authors, according to which three stages of ecstasy are reached successively, owing to *samā‘*: *tawājud*, the ecstasy deliberately evoked by means of psychotechnics: *wajd*, the state of ecstasy proper; and *wujūd*, the state beyond the limits of ecstasy, that is existence in God (Lawrence 1983: 76–7). Excessive enthusiasm of the Chishtis for *samā‘* gradually mitigated the ‘sobriety’ of their original practice, pushing the fraternity towards ecstatic Sufism.

The history of the veneration of the tomb in Ajmer, which has become, without exaggeration, the main Sufi shrine of India, more than matches the history of the saint’s life in its richness of events. As happens to be the custom among Sufis, the Khwaja was buried near his *kh̲ānqāh*, and the original *mazār* of bricks was in due course covered with a marble cenotaph. The tomb, erected on the orders of the Sultan of Malwa Mahmud Khalji (1436–69) was later rebuilt and expanded more than once. The main entrance doors of the *dargāh* Buland Darwaza were built during the reign of the same sultan.

No information is available regarding pilgrimage to Ajmer in the thirteenth century, but after a hundred years the role of the Chishtiyya fraternity in Indian society had increased to such an extent that performing *ziyārat* to the *mazār* of the founder of the fraternity became obligatory for representatives of the ruling dynasties and the aristocracy. Thus, poet ‘Isami, author of the historical *mathnawī* ‘The Sultans’ conquests’ (*Futūḥ as-salāṭīn*, 1350) refers to Muhammad bin Tughluq’s pilgrimage to Ajmer:

> Mu‘īn al-din, that Sijzī who was a refuge of the faith
> That Guide of the Road who is asleep at Ajmer,
> When the Sultan had performed *ziyārat* to him
> He took the road thence to his capital (Dehlī)
>
> (Digby 1983: 97)

A further reference to regular pilgrimage to Ajmer in the second half of the fourteenth century occurs in the *malfūẓāt* of Sayyid Muhammad

Gesudaraz, recorded in 1399–1400. Gesudaraz is talking of an injunction to perform *ziyārat* of the *panj pīr*, who, as explained, 'are the five Great Shaykhs who preceded Gēsūdarāz, viz. Naṣīr al-dīn, Niẓām al-dīn, Farīd al-dīn, Quṭb al-dīn and Mu'īn al-dīn' (Digby 1983: 97).

There also exists a little historical evidence about Firoz Shah Tughluq, Sher Shah Suri and Zafar Khan, progenitor of the Sultans of Gujarat, visiting the tomb. However, during the times of the Delhi Sultanate, for a person who did not have the sultan's suite (*sawārī*) at his disposal, reaching Ajmer was not that easy, as the town was situated away from major caravan routes and the way to it from Delhi was considered to be unsafe because of attacks of Rajput detachments and armed bands of robbers.[9] Only during the reign of Akbar, who had made travel in the empire relatively hazard-free and not so risky, did Ajmer Sharif turn into a place of mass pilgrimage. Since sovereignty over Ajmer opened the way to numerous Rajput principalities, with which the Great Mughals were constantly at war, many of the masterpieces of ritual architecture which adorn this town were built in fulfilment of the vows made to the saint by Mughal sovereigns and their military leaders in exchange for victory over yet another Rana (prince) of Mewar, or Marwar.

As testified by Abul Fazl, Akbar became interested in the saint's personality on hearing *qawwālī* in Agra eulogizing the miraculous power of his *baraka*. He performed his first pilgrimage on 14 January 1562, after which he saw to it that a road was laid from Fatehpur Sikri to Ajmer, along which at distances of one *kos* (approximately three kilometres) apart, small towers (*kōs-minār*) were erected, which have survived to this day. After the capture of the Rajput fortress of Chittor, Akbar on his return journey visited Ajmer for the second time on 6 March 1568. This time he made a present of a huge cauldron[10] to the *dargāh* for cooking food for pilgrims and generously showered gifts and money on the Khwaja's descendants.

The emperor's devotion to the saint of Ajmer grew commensurate with his intercourse with Shaikh Salim Chishti (d. 1571), to whose supernatural intercession tradition ascribed the birth of long-awaited heir to the throne prince Salim (future Mughal emperor Jahangir). He performed his third *ziyārat* in February 1570 as an ordinary pilgrim, traversing the path from Agra to Ajmer on foot to offer prayers of thanks to the saint for the birth of the first-born. A year earlier he had a mosque erected from red sandstone in one of the three courtyards of the *dargāh*. The mosque now bears the name Akbari Masjid.

During Akbar's reign the main shrine (*qubba*) was rebuilt and crowned with a gilded dome; in any case the inscription in gold in *nasta'līq* style on three sides of the drum (i.e. cylindrical base) of the dome goes back to 1579 and says:

Khwāja-i khwājagān Mu'īnuddīn
Ashraf-i awliyā'-i rūy-i zamīn
Aftāb-i sipihr-i kaun-o-makān
Pādshāh-i sarīr-i mulk-i yaqīn
Dar jamāl-o-kamāl-i-ān che sukhan
Īn mubayyan buvad ba ḥiṣn-i ḥaṣīn
Ai darat qiblagāh-i ahl-i yaqīn
Bar darat mihr-o-māh sūda jabīn
Rūi bar dargahat hamīñ sānīd
Sad hazārān malik chū khusraw-i chīn
Khādimān-i darat hama Riẓvān
Dar safā rauẓat chū khuld-i barīn
Dharra-i khāk-i-ū 'abīr sirisht
Qaṭra-i āb-i-ū chū mā'-yi mu'īn
Ilahī tā buvad khurshīd-o-māhī
Chirāgh-i chishtiyān rā rōshnā'ī

(Tirmizi 1968: 30)

Master of masters, Mu'inuddin,
Noblest of saints on the face of the earth,
The sun on the celestial sphere of the universe
The padishah on the throne of the realm of faith.
What to say about his beauty and perfection?
They are obvious from impregnable fortress.
O, your door is like *qibla* for the faithful,
Sun and moon rub their foreheads on your threshold.
At your *dargāh* similarly prostrate
Hundreds of thousands of kings like the sovereign of China.
Your door attendants are all *Riẓvāns*,
(Since) in its sanctity your tomb is like paradise.
The particle of its dust has the quality of perfumes,
The drop of its moisture is like transparent water.
O Allah, till the sun and the moon last,
Let the lamp of the Chishtis shine brightly.

If this inscription is compared with the couplet engraved on Data Sahib's tomb, it will be clear that for these and many other texts of

similar purpose the key term is 'door' or 'threshold', expressed by the Persian words *dar*, *āstān* or by their Indian equivalents, for example by the word *ćaukhaṭ*. A saint is one at whose threshold or door all the mortals – from kings to beggars – bow their heads and 'rub their foreheads'. Sainthood is separated from mundane life by a spiritually insurmountable barrier – the much-trumpeted threshold. The special insular space, the *khalwat*, in which a mystic, who has renounced the world, dwells in his lifetime, retains its isolation, even after his death, in the *dargāh*, signifying the same spatial restricted insularity (*dar* – 'door'; '*gāh*' – place, space). In other words the sanctum, which is what the saint's tomb is, manifests itself in detachment from the external environment and the gate, door or threshold are the entrance to the sanctum, the intermediate space, through which a person comes into contact with the saint or venerates him.

The origin of this symbol has ritual as well as historical basis. As has already been mentioned, one of the main rituals of a saint's tomb is the kissing of his threshold (*āstānbosī*). This ritual in fact came into being earlier than the cult of Muslim saints, in a pre-Islamic age, when bowing one's head at the threshold was a part of palace ritual at the courts of the Byzantine emperors and the Iranian padshahs. Later the kissing of the threshold (*āstānbosī*) acquired a wide spectrum of meanings, connected with an expression of veneration and respect both to a temporal and a spiritual person. In the texts of inscriptions on tombs this ritual is even incorporated into the semantic connotations of the Arabic word *bāb* (gate). This term signified the rank of Muslim saints, serving as the 'gates', through which God, a *quṭb* of the Sufis or a 'concealed Imam' of the Shi'as, communicates with the faithful. The word *bāb* was even a part of the title of many Sufi *shaikhs* and *awliyā*, the most well-known of whom happened to be the Bab, the founder of Babism, a religio-political movement in Iran during the nineteenth century.

The Muslim architecture that actualized many doctrinal postulates of Sufism realized the ritual symbolism of doors, gates and thresholds in numerous architectural images of portals, gates and towers located over gates, without which a saint's tomb is just inconceivable. The sacred space of a *dargāh* begins at the gate (*darwāza*), leading into a *riwāq*, in front of which the faithful are required to leave their footwear. The front portal (*peshtāq*) of the tomb proper turns out to be more insurmountable: crossing it is prohibited to individual categories of visitors – sometimes to followers of other faiths and sometimes on the basis of gender – only to women or, on the contrary, only to men, sometimes to lepers or lunatics and so on, depending

on the saint's specialization. Finally, the last and the most forbidden barrier is the door, which happens to be deep inside the *aiwān* arch of the *peshtāq*, and which serves as an object of ritual veneration. Pilgrims prostrate themselves beside it in prayerful reverence, they kiss its threshold and touch the lintel with a hand, here they also present their offerings to the saint.

It is interesting that particular images of Muslim *ghazal* correspond to the symbolism of door and threshold in the practice of the veneration of saints, where the same terms – *dar*, *āstān* and *ćaukhaṭ* – find expression in the motif of the lover's (*'āshiq*) veneration of and selfless service to the beloved (*ma'shūq*). It is difficult to say when this motif took shape, but it is to be found quite often in the *diwān* of the great Persian poet of the fourteenth century Hafiz Shirazi. Here is just one example:

> *Ba ḥājib-i dar-i khalwatsarā-i khāṣṣ bigū*
> *Fulān zi gūshanashīnān-i khāk-i dargāh-i māst*
> Tell the door-keeper at the gate of the secluded chamber:
> So-and-so is one of those, who sit in the dust of our
> threshold.
>
> (Hafiz Shirazi 1994: 35)

In this *bait* (couplet) there is a semantic series, correlating with the behaviour of the pilgrim: like the saint or some other object of veneration, the beloved dwells *inside* a special world, behind the doors of the secluded forbidden chamber (*khalwatsarā-i khāṣṣ*), and the lover comes under the category of those many who happen to be *outside*, in particular, those who sit in the sacred dust of its threshold (*gūshanashīnān-i khāk-i dargāh*). The word *gūshanashīnān* also stands for 'hermits' and 'those who have renounced the world', i.e. the same Sufis.

From these and many other similar examples it is obvious that here we come across a fusion of the image of the *ma'shūq*'s house with saint's dwelling – this is *ḥarām*, the forbidden inaccessible space, where entry is prohibited for the *'āshiq*. Communion with and service of the beloved is possible only at the threshold, on the border of two worlds, at the entrance to the shrine, exactly where the lover yearns to bow his head or lie in dust. It is interesting that even at the later stages of its development Muslim romantic poetry retains in itself the same traditional, even ritual notion about the veneration and reverence of the shrine, which is to be found in considerably earlier inscriptions on tombs. Here we give just a few examples from

classical Urdu poetry of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. Mir Taqi Mir (1722–1810) wrote:

> *Sajda us āstān kā na jiskō hu'ā naṣīb*
> *Wŏh apnē ĕ'tiqād mēñ insān hī nahīñ*
> One who failed to bow his head at this threshold,
> I am sure, is not a human being at all.
> (*Kulliyat-i Mir* 1968: 212)

Although the reference here is, as always, to the threshold of the beloved's house, the word *sajda*, used by Mir, stands exactly for prostration in the course of prayers, when the faithful brings his forehead in contact with the ground.

> *Majāl kyā ki terē ghar mēñ pāñ'oñ nahīñ rakhūñ*
> *Yĕh ārzū hai mirā sar hō tērī ćaukhaṭ hō*
> What power have I to set foot in your house?
> All I desire is that my head and your threshold (should come together).
> (Matthews and Shackle 1972: 101)

In this *bait* from Imambakhsh Nasikh (who died in 1838), the image is also based on ritual gesture: the head of the lover/the faithful and threshold of the beloved's house/shrine blend with each other. Stepping inside the house is, of course, impossible, as it is forbidden. As Mirza Ghalib (1797–1869) stated:

> *Us fitna khū kē dar sē ab uṭhte nahīñ Asad,*
> *Is mēñ hamārē sar pĕh qiyāmat hī kyoñ na hō*
> Asad, we will not raise ourselves from the threshold of that disturber of the peace,
> Even if Doomsday were to pass right over our heads.
> (*Diwan-i Ghalib* 1957: 72)

A pilgrim, performing *ziyārat* to the tomb of a saint, often crawls towards it, as if measuring with his own body the space separating him from the shrine, and then prostrating himself near its threshold, lies there for a long time. Ghalib's verse contains a distant allusion to this ritual behaviour.

However, let us come back to the history of the *dargāh* in Ajmer. Akbar also had to adjudicate in the protracted dispute between descendants of Khwaja Mu'inuddin regarding the right to be the *pīr*

and estate manager of the tomb, which in the sixteenth century was not only a highly respectable but also profitable post. In contrast to Suhrawardis, Chishtis did not pass on *baraka* by right of succession from father to son, and besides that Mu'inuddin did not leave any directions regarding his successor in the Ajmer *khānqāh*. A certain Khwaja Husain, who was the *pīr* of Ajmer Sharif in Akbar's times, apparently did not enjoy the support of Shaikh Salim Chishti, who wielded great influence over the Emperor. And, therefore, when the case was submitted to Akbar for his verdict he delivered quite a statesman-like judgement: he removed the former *pīr* and appointed as the estate manager of the *dargāh* not a representative of one of the contending clans but his own official (*manṣabdār*). This story, narrated by Bada'uni in *The Extracts from Chronicles* (*Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*) is, on the whole, unprecedented, since the questions of succession and inheritance in Sufi fraternities before and after Akbar were decided without interference of state authorities.

Emperor Jahangir, who was born in Ajmer, lived here for a full three years in the palaces of Daulat-khana and Chashma-i-nur, which were built specially for him. In the year 1614, following his father's example, he donated to the *dargāh* yet another cauldron, in which food could be cooked for five thousand pilgrims. He also adorned the saint's cenotaph with a fence of pure gold, which was replaced by one made of silver in the reign of thrifty Aurangzeb. The importance Jahangir attached to Ajmer is obvious, in particular, from the fact that it was in this town that he accepted the credentials of the first British ambassador Thomas Roe, who, in the year 1615, was sent to the Mughal court by King James I.

In the *riwāq* of the tomb Emperor Shah Jahan, who was also blessed with his first-born in answer to his prayers in Ajmer, in the year 1637 built a magnificent mosque with eleven arches of white marble. He also furnished the complex of the *dargāh* with yet another gate: Shahjahani Darwaza, which is more often called Kalima Darwaza, since Muslim affirmation of faith is carved on it in *thulth* script. Even Shah Jahan's sons Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb had performed pilgrimage to Ajmer. Mystically gifted Sufi-philosopher Dara was born in Ajmer and felt a special attachment to this place. His rival Aurangzeb visited the *dargāh* for the first time with a purpose that might be considered expiatory, that is, following the execution of his elder brother on his orders.

Since in his domains Aurangzeb had proclaimed a ban on *samā'*, attendants of the tomb refused to accept from him the offerings customary for such an occasion. Then at the time of the next visit to

the *dargāh* the emperor gave orders not to prevent ritual performance of *qawwāli* in honour of the saint and, according to tradition, was so deeply moved by the singing that he heaped gold on the musicians from head to foot.[11] Finally, Shah Jahan's daughter Jahanara, deeply fascinated by Sufism, visited the *dargāh* more than once.

As the Mughal aristocracy, imitating the members of the emperor's family, was literally overloading Ajmer Sharif with new buildings, at the close of his reign Jahangir banned the construction of new buildings on the premises of the *dargāh* without prior sanction, restricting the pious impulses of the courtiers to the space beyond its outer fence. That is why the complex came to be surrounded by numerous mosques, covered courts (*dālān*), summerhouses (*bārahdarī*) and memorial steles. Notable among these structures are two of the rarest mosques in the subcontinent, built by women. One, of red sandstone, was erected on the order of Maya Ba'i, who was the wet-nurse and nanny[12] of princess Zebunnisa, Aurangzeb's daughter. The other one was gifted to the *dargāh* by the daughter of the great Indian musician Miyan Tansen, Ba'i Tilokdi by name (who, judging by her name, professed Hinduism). As a matter of fact, it is only from the inscription on the frieze of this mosque that historians came to know that Tansen had a singer daughter who had inherited her father's profession (Tirmizi 1968: 52).

The tradition of pilgrimage to the saint's tomb by emperors did not wane even in the later Mughals' time: Bahadur Shah I, Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shah Rangeela also performed *ziyārat* to Ajmer. However, in the year 1756, as a result of war between Rajput clans, the town passed into the hands of the Marathas, who, to give them their due, continued to provide public services and amenities to the *dargāh*. In particular, in 1769, the Maratha vicegerent, Santoji by name, laid out near the gate of Madar Darwaza a big regular park, called Chishti Chaman, dedicated to the saint. In the year 1818 Ajmer was annexed by the English, under whom the *dargāh* ceased to be an object of state patronage and the construction of new ritual structures in it came to an end.

What the *dargāh* looked like in the middle of the nineteenth century we know from the notes of the English traveller William Finch:

> Before you come to this tomb you pass three faire courts of which the first contayneth near an acre of ground, paved all with black and white marble, wherein are interred many of 'Mohamet's Cursed Kindred'; on the left is a faire tank, inclosed with stone. The Second Court is paved like the

> former, but richer, twice as big as the Exchange in London; in the midest whereof hangs a curious candle-stick with many lights. Into the third you pass by a brazen gate curiously wrought, it is the fairest of the three, especially, near the door of the sepulchre, where the pavement is curiously interlaid; the door is large and is inlaid with mother-of-pearl and the pavement about the tomb of interlaid marble; the sepulchre very curiously wrought in work, of mother-of-pearl and gold with an Epitaph in the Persian Tongue.
>
> (Tirmizi 1968: 17–18)

Even in our day, as in the Great Mughals' times, making an offering to the *dargāh*, adorning or carrying out repairs of any of its numerous buildings is an act of piety, and that is why on first impression Ajmer Sharif resembles a construction site, where saws whine, hammers chatter and the smell of oil-paint lingers. In the first courtyard of the complex, which one reaches, as usual, by passing through a lofty quadrangular tower, Buland Darwaza, next to the Akbari Masjid mosque there are two huge copper cauldrons, replicas of those which were donated by Akbar and Jahangir. The meals cooked there are meant for the pilgrims as well as for the saint's descendants, who possess the exclusive right to despoil the cauldron regularly under the pretence of the ritual *dēg-i Chittōr kushā* ('cauldron of victory over Chittor'). The story goes that in commemoration of this victory the Khwaja's descendants literally take the cauldron by force, snatching away the rice with an unequivocal warlike display.

In the second courtyard of the *dargāh* there is the saint's mausoleum, its newly gilded dome dazzles one's eyes; an elegant silvery vault is erected over the front portal, and central doors are inlaid with engraved silver panels. They lead to a fretted cubical structure, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, inside which, in the *mazār* covered with green brocade, the founder of Chishtiyya fraternity is laid to eternal rest.

Contiguous to the mausoleum is Shah Jahan's mosque, erected on a parapet and surrounded with a balustrade of polished marble. Its richly ornamented interior is clearly visible through five arched doors. Opposite the mosque towers the gate Shahjahani Darwaza, flanked on both the sides with spacious halls for ritual gatherings (*maḥfil k͟hāna*). The tombs and *mazārs* of the saint's disciples and descendants, the Mughal nobles and military leaders cling closely to each other in the far corners of the courtyard, enclosed in stone fences or lattices. Among them there is Bibi Hafiz Jamal's mausoleum, situated in an exclusive 'women's annexe', Begum Dalan, where quite a number of

Mughal princesses are buried. Near the southern wall of the mosque the dismissed *pīr* Khwaja Husain is buried, whose tomb, albeit reduced in dimension, is an exact replica of Mu'inuddin's tomb.

The third courtyard opens with the gate Ćhatri Darwaza, the name of which is derived from the word *ćhatrī* (umbrella, awning, sunshade), and which is crowned with two umbrella-shaped pavilions. The cells (*ḥujra*) for dervishes are situated in the *riwāq* of this courtyard. In the southern corner of the courtyard there is the *jhālrā*, a deep well cut out of the rock, which can be reached by going down steep, worn-out steps. The tradition of the Chishtis encourages one to believe that the water comes here directly from the sacred spring *Zamzam*, which is in Ka'ba.

The basic principles of the Chishtiya fraternity were formulated after the Khwaja's death by his disciples, including the above-mentioned Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori (1192–1276). Born in Lahore, Hamiduddin was familiar with Indian reality from his childhood and was able to adapt to it the doctrines of Sufism *waḥdat al-wujūd*. In particular he advocated avoiding the infliction of injury to living beings (in the spirit of *ahiṅsā* of Hinduism and Jainism), insisted upon strict observance of vegetarianism by his followers and forbade the custom, widespread in *khānqāhs*, of charitable distribution of meat after the funeral of a dervish.

Hamiduddin was also the first among the Chishtis to propagate virtuous poverty, *faqr*. (Hagiographic literature affirms that his wife used to spin coarse linen for his clothing with her own hand.) Apropos of this he entered into polemics repeatedly with the founder of the Indian branch of the Suhrawardiyya fraternity, Baha'uddin Zakaria Multani, who did not consider being well-off as contradictory to a mystic's mode of life.

On the request of his *murshid*, Hamiduddin wrote down nine principles of the *ṭarīqa* Chishtiyya, each of which had to be followed by the generations of Khwaja Mu'inuddin's disciples:

1. One should not earn money.
2. One should not borrow money from anyone.
3. One should not seek help from anyone but God and one's *murshid*.
4. One should not keep money, food and other goods until the following day.
5. One should not curse anyone.
6. One should consider his virtuous deed due to his *pīr*'s kindness, to the intercession of the Prophet, or to the Divine mercy.

7 One should consider his evil deed due to one's evil 'self' responsible for the action.
8 One should regularly fast during the day and spend the night in prayer.
9 One should remain quiet and speak only when it is imperative to do so.

(Rizvi 1986: 123–4)

Although Ajmer Sharif continued to be the main shrine and the cradle of the Chishtiyya order in the subcontinent, immediately after Khwaja Mu'inuddin's death the centre of activities of the fraternity shifted to Delhi. Thanks to the selfless efforts of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, with whom begins the Chishti tradition of non-collaboration with the authorities, refusal to be in service (*shughl*) and non-acceptance of gifts and donations from the high and mighty of this world, the fraternity not only gained a foothold in the capital, but also became the most influential and popular spiritual institution of the Delhi Sultanate.

One should not be deceived by the word 'popular': it does not signify that the Chishtis initiated into the fraternity each and everyone without exception, although they had considerably enlarged the contingent of neophytes at the expense of non-Muslims, from whom at first, till their initiation, they did not demand formal conversion to Islam. As persons capable of true comprehension of human souls, the Great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya understood that mystic experience was a phenomenon of a different and higher order than ecstasy (*wajd*), the reaching of which was the practical purpose of Sufism in the opinion of the majority. The well-known automation of the practice of dervishes, typical for many *ṭarīqas*, led to the false conclusion that an ordinary person can in a short enough period of time master mystic experience with the help of a set of psycho-physical exercises, such as participation in *samā'*, breath control (*ḥabs-i dam*), rhythmic movements, or the silent and loud *dhikr* (remembrance/praise of God).

At the same time the ultimate aim of the Sufi's path, *fanā/baqā* (annihilation/subsistence), demanded of him complete regeneration and transformation of the personality, which was within the reach only of the specially gifted and chosen few. Momentary altered states of the psyche (*ḥāl*), ecstatic enlightenment, falling into a trance right up to complete loss of consciousness, which the uninitiated could experience at the time of collective auditions, were not genuine mystic experiences, although they did create for a man the illusion of transient unity with the Absolute.

Consequently, an initiation that was both popular and within the reach of the masses could be an initiation only to the ethical aspects of the doctrine of the fraternity, to the notions about the mundane life worked out by it and the interiorization that is common to all true believers and the reason for the external forms of piety. The Chishtis based their ethical preaching on above-mentioned postulates, of which the most relevant were: poverty (not identical with the universal Sufi principle of selflessness), non-violence (a ban on all kind of aggression and on doing harm to any living being), non-collaboration with the authorities and renunciation of proselytizing activity, which signified transition from the obligatory Islamization of non-Muslims to a dialogue with them in the field of ideology. It is natural that in the conditions of medieval Indian society, where indigent non-Muslims were in the overwhelming majority, such a programme was destined for massive success.

Penetration of Chishti ethos into the commercial and vocational strata of the society; collaboration of Chishtis with representatives of various social and religious groups; their recourse to the languages, images and concepts of the local population – all these became that deficient ferment, under whose effect the spontaneous syncretism which is usual for popular religion could come right and be transformed into the peculiar composite culture of South Asia in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.

4

THE ASCETIC OF PAKPATTAN

There is an undoubted correlation between the extent of remoteness of the *dargāh* or *k͟hānqāh* of a Muslim saint from imperial capitals and big cities of South Asia, on the one hand, and the nature of his cult and his type of sainthood, on the other. Metropolitan saints, such as Data Sahib and three of the five Great *shaik͟hs* of the Chishtiyya fraternity, possessed universal *baraka*, and were devoid of group or motivational specificity. These are the saints of the entire social environment – from the sultan to the beggar; these are the saints for all seasons and events of life; their sainthood is of a 'general type', and the practice of the veneration of each of them, in spite of inevitable local variations, has a stable commonality of the basic constituent elements. But the further into the thick of people's life fate happened to bring a mystic or a missionary who was destined to be glorified as a saint, the more individual and selective became his *baraka* and the more unusual and quaint his cult seemed to be, having incorporated into itself the colours and forms of the local substratum.

Conscious centrifugal movement of the South Asian Sufis begins with Khwaja Mu'inuddin, although it may be difficult to consider somewhere as strategically important as Ajmer as an out-of-the-way place. It is true that already the next generation of saints, Baba Farid, Baha'uddin Zakariya Multani, Jalaluddin Tabrizi and Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari, preferred to settle down still further away from major imperial centres, which at different times Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were considered to be. In Punjab or Bengal the authority of Sharī'at, the discipline of Sufi orders and the once omnipotent charm of the Persian language grew weak and together with them the impulse of Islamization also abated. Remaining as islets in the sea of non-Muslim population, Sufi mystics were obliged to change over from noble Persian to native dialects and idioms, to write spiritual poetry in accordance with the rules of local prosody

and to compose songs to local tunes. At the same time this 'localism' was more often synonymous with that peculiar to the common people, and the culture which provincial Sufis had to use as their base did not have the classical and cosmopolitan nature (naturally, within the limits of the world of Islam) that was to be found in the capitals.

The genres of classical poetry – *mathnawī*, *ghazal*, *rubā'ī*, *qiṭ'a* – for ages used by Sufis on the Indian periphery, yielded place to the Indian *dohā*, *pada* and *sorat'hā*, to the indigenous folk forms of *bārahmāsa* (songs of various seasons), Gujarati *chakkināma* (hand-mill songs) and *charkhināma* (spinning-wheel songs), Punjabi *kāfī*, Sindhi *wā'ī*, Baluchi *jumjumā*, etc.; that is, the genres and genre forms, devoid of Islamic origin and content, acquired a new, Sufi context.

Originally writing only in Persian and subsequently going for bilingualism, the South Asian Sufis turned out to be standing at the sources of one or another form of modern Indian literature or some tradition of vernacular writing. Thus, for example, the fame of the founder of Punjabi, Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi, Gujarati, Kashmiri and Baluchi literatures is ascribed correspondingly to Baba Farid (the thirteenth century), Muhammad Gesudaraz (the fifteenth century), Bayazid Ansari, Qadi Qadan, Muhammad Jiv Jan, Habba Khatun (all of the sixteenth century) and Jam Durrek (the eighteenth century), each of whom to a greater or lesser extent is revered as a saint.[1]

Preaching strict monotheism and inculcating the idea of the veracity of faith in only one God into their flock, provincial saints and Sufis at the same time emphasized that differences between Islam and other religions is in the field of cult and ritual, and that is why they are superficial and false. Assertions that a Sufi 'is neither a Muslim nor a Hindu' and that one need not follow the outward norms of religion laid down by '*ulamā* are repeated in the South Asian devotional poetry with the persistence and constancy of an incantation. Later on these assertions became the conventional tradition of the Sufi poetry that was summed up by the Punjabi poet-mystic Khwaja Ghulam Farid (1841–1901) in one of his *kāfī*:[2]

How we detest the mullah's preaching!
In holy Ibn ul Arabi's teaching[3]
Our faith stands confident and sure,

And so my way is quite inverted –
All prayers and fasts have I deserted:
My waywardness is not obscure!
(Fakhar Zaman 1995: 457; translated by C. Shackle)

In the early stages of the formation of a literary norm in the Siraiki language in which Ghulam Farid wrote his verses, the important poets of Punjab and Sindh continue to develop this theme, which originated in medieval poetry. Sultan Bahu, famous for the fact that he concluded each line of his verses with the mystic exclamation *hu*,[4] said about the Sufis:

Na oh Hindu na oh Momin
Na sajda den masiti hoo
Dam dam de vich dekhan maula
Jinhan jan kaza na kiti Hoo,
They are neither Hindu nor Muslims,
Nor do they bow down to pray in mosque.
In every breath they see God
And never miss the mystic cry of Hoo!
(Tariq Rahman 1995: 30)

The great Punjabi mystic Bullhe Shah echoes him even more explicitly:

Hindu na nahin Musalman
Bahe tarinjan tuj abhiman
Sunni nahin na hum Shia.
Sulah kul ka marag liya
We are neither Hindus nor Muslims
We sit and spin leaving pride of creed
We are neither Sunnis nor Shias
We are non-violent towards everyone.
(Tariq Rahman 1995: 334)

Sindhi mystic Sachal Sarmast (1739–1829) gives a modified version of the same theme in a *sorat'hā* in Siraiki:

Jaheen dil pita ishq da jam
Sa dil mast o mast madam
Deen mazahib raehnde kithe
Kufr kithan Islam.
Those hearts have drunk the cup of the wine of love
Their heart remains ever intoxicated,
Religion, creeds do not remain intact –
Nor do paganism nor Islam.
(Tariq Rahman 1995: 30)

However, these are all nothing but effusions of Sufi proselytizing rhetoric, which, as has been already mentioned above, should not deceive us and serve as the basis for inferences about the supra-religious mode of life of mystics and saints. Thus, contrary to their own assertions, Sultan Bahu, Bullhe Shah and Sachal Sarmast were pious Muslims, regularly visiting the mosque and observing all the injunctions of the *Sharī'at*. What is more, even while assimilating the vernacular and aspects of folklore, and accommodating regional and ethnic traditions, as well as going through the process of the 'adoption of simplicity' and naturalization, Sufis never deserted the mainstream of *taṣawwuf*. This refers to the teachings of the Qur'ān and *Sunna*. It must also be said that old legends and modern speculations notwithstanding, Sufis rarely became *mu'aḥḥids*, i.e. the Unitarians, for whom it is all the same, which one and only God – Ram or Rahman – to worship.[5] In their turn, the people amongst whom the provincial *awliyā* lived and preached venerated them to the best of their ability – in accordance with the laws of their ancestors, painting their cult in the gay colours of local rites and rituals, so far removed from the precepts of Islam.

Nevertheless, the powerful wave of Indo-Persian Sufism, which had risen so high in the imperial capitals, became divided, spread across the boundless expanses of the subcontinent, merged with the water of already existing springs, filled dried-up riverbeds, was absorbed by the local soil and fantastically changed the South Asian cultural landscape. One of the most striking examples of such a deep penetration into the indigenous layers of the Indian substratum is the literary and mystical activity and cult of the eminent saint of the subcontinent, Shaikh Fariduddin Mas'ud (Baba Farid). Third in succession among the great *shai<u>kh</u>s* of the Chishtiyya order, he spent the greater part of his life in the desolate uninhabited Ajodhan, named Pakpattan ('the Ferry of the Pure') in his honour – the semantics of this toponym is extraordinarily similar to the literary meaning of the Hindu *tirtha*. Shaikh Farid, almost literally, became the 'passage' of sainthood, having passed on the *baraka* of his outstanding *murshid*, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, to his own no less famous *murīd*, Nizamuddin Awliya. Having significantly transformed the respectable conduct of the moderate, 'sober' mystic and drawing inspiration from the tradition of 'intoxicated' *maj<u>dh</u>ūbs*, he is also the people's ideal intercessor and a model world-renouncing ascetic. He has himself formulated his credo in the following Persian verses:

> *<u>Kh</u>āham ki hamīsha dar hawā-yi tu ziyam*
> *<u>Kh</u>ākī shawam wa ba-zīr-i pā-yi tu ziyam*

Maqṣūd-i man-i banda zi kaunain tu-yī
Az bahr-i tu mīram zi barā-yi tu ziyam
(Nizami 1955: 2)

I wish to live always yearning for You,
To become dust and live under Your feet.
My object in both worlds are You,
I have to die for Your sake and live for Your sake.

Measured by inadequate Indian yardsticks, the abundance of information and stories about Shaikh Farid in hagiographic literature is explained by the extraordinary popularity of his cult. In the first place, there are the already mentioned *malfūẓāt* recorded by Amir Hasan Sijzi and Amir Khurd, who in the course of many years noted down Nizamuddin Awliya's recollections of his famous *murshīd* and his predecessor. Particularly rich in details is *Siyar al-awliyā*, since both the grandfather and father of its author, Amir Khurd, were also Shaikh Farid's disciples, who had for years lived by his side. Anecdotes from the saint's life and quotations from his discourses are included in all major hagiographic collections – from the early and reliable *Siyar al-'ārifīn* of Jamali Kanboh and *Akhbār al-akhyār* of 'Abdulhaqq Muhaddis Dihlawi to the later and quite inauthentic *Gulzār-i abrār* of Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari and *Jawāhir-i farīdī* of 'Ali Asghar.[6]

Shaikh Farid belonged to the new generation of South Asian *awliyā* who were indigenous natives of the subcontinent. His grandfather,[7] who had arrived in Multan from Kabul, was given the post of a *qāḍī* in the small town of Kahtwal, where the future saint was born (in the year 1175) and spent his childhood. In the years of his childhood the greatest influence upon Farid was exerted by his mother Qarsum-bibi, a woman of deep piety, although having somewhat strange notions about pedagogy.[8] *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* narrates a story about a miracle, connected with the power of her prayer: once, at night, a thief got into the house, and was literally blinded by the radiance emanating from the praying woman. The thief repented and beseeched Qarsum-bibi to pray for recovery of his sight. She heeded his persuasions and soon the burglar was healed, adopted Islam and started living an irreproachable life (Amir Hasan 1992: 221).

Apparently, the inhabitants of medieval Kahtwal were not too devout, as young Farid's religious zeal evoked sneers on their part, reflected in the sobriquet 'The judge's possessed son' (*Qāḍī baććā dīwāna*). In any case, when Kahtwal was visited in transit by the well-

known Persian mystic, the future eminent saint of Bengal, Jalaluddin Tabrizi, and he inquired whether there were any Sufis in the town, he was told about the Judge's young son. Jalaluddin visited Farid, bringing a pomegranate with him as a gift. The youth, who was fasting, declined the refreshment, however from the pomegranate one seed fell out, which he ate after *ifṭār*, i.e. after breaking the fast. As soon as the pomegranate seed touched his lips, he experienced his first mystic enlightenment. Here it will be appropriate to recollect the story of spiritual awakening of young Khwaja Mu'inuddin, who had tasted of the sesame seeds, presented to him by a *majdhūb*. For several years Farid regretted that he did not eat the whole pomegranate – in that case the experience undergone by him would have been more pervasive. However, later Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki set him at rest, explaining that only one seed contained the saint's *baraka* and this very seed fell to Farid's lot (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 219–20). In the course of time having enquired his own *murīds*, Shaikh Farid was adamant that they should always eat the whole pomegranate offered to them, so that, God forbid, they may not miss the sacred seed.

Having been educated until then at home, Farid, at the age of 18, set off to Multan to continue his studies. This town in Punjab in the thirteenth century had become a stronghold of the Suhrawardiyya fraternity and was within the *walāyat*, i.e. the limits of spiritual jurisdiction of the head of this order, Baha'uddin Zakariya Multani. By a happy coincidence, usual for all the saints' lives, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, in the course of his journey from Central Asian Aush to Delhi, arrived in Multan at the same time. His relations with the head of the Suhrawardis were quite strained, and he was in a hurry to leave the town as soon as possible. One brief meeting in the mosque near the Sara'i Khalwa'i was enough to bind the teacher and the disciple for life.

It is not particularly difficult to imagine the circumstances of this bygone meeting, which took place in the same year, 1193, that the founder of the Chishtiyya fraternity reached the limits of Delhi. A youth, emaciated by fasts and with entangled hair, is sitting in a corner of the mosque, reading the manual on Muslim law, *Nāfa*', and looking askance at an older man wearing a travelling *jubba* and a high felt cap of foreign style, from under which locks touched with grey are hanging down. Having performed his prayers, the stranger turns round and asks the youth what is he reading. 'This is *Nāfa*'', says the youth in a whisper, since a well-bred young man is supposed to answer an elder's question in a low voice and with downcast eyes. 'May there be benefit (*naf*') for you in its study', says

the newcomer affectionately, preparing to depart. A sudden flash illuminates Farid's consciousness – the Sufis call this state of mind *ishrāq*. He darts off and prostrates himself before the unknown person with the exclamation:

Maqbūl-i tu juz muqbil-i jāwīd nashod
Wa-z luṭf-i tu hēch banda naumīd nashod.
Your chosen one is chosen for ever,
And because of your generosity no one remained without hope.
(Hamid Qalandar 1959: 220)

The meeting in the mosque drastically changed Farid's fate: having completed education ahead of time in the *madrasa* in Multan, he left for Delhi to appear before his *murshid*, where he underwent the rite of initiation (*bai'a*) and took up residence in Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's *khānqāh* in Mehrauli for almost twenty years. Here it was his fortune to get acquainted with Khwaja Mu'inuddin himself during the latter's visit to the capital in connection with the already mentioned problem of *iḥyā.* Having seen Farid emaciated by fasts, the Khwaja exclaimed: 'Qutbuddin! How long will you burn this poor fellow in the fire of penitence?' (Nizami 1955: 91). According to the laws of ethics of Sufi *ṭarīqas*, a senior in the hierarchy was not supposed to address a junior, bypassing his immediate preceptor. That is why, according to another version, the Khwaja did justice to Farid's zeal, but again addressing Bakhtiyar Kaki: 'Baba Bakhtiyar! You have caught a noble falcon which will not build its nest except on the holy tree of Heaven. Farid is the lamp that will illuminate the *Silsilah* of the *durweshes*' (Nizami 1955: 21). After this an honour unprecedented for the Chishtiyya fraternity was conferred on Farid – he was simultaneously blessed by his own *pīr* as well as by the latter's *murshīd*. The uniqueness of this event was later noted by Amir Khurd in *Siyar al-awliyā*:

Bakshish-i kaunain az shaikhain shod dar bāb-i tu
Bādshāhī yāftī z-īn bādshāhān-i zamān
Both the worlds have been granted to you by the two shaikhs,
You got a kingdom from these two kings of the age.
(Amir Khurd 1978: 72)

In the very first years of Farid's sojourns in Delhi his inclination for rigorous ascetic practice (*zuhd*), which distinguishes him both from

his predecessors and his successors in the fraternity, became apparent. The Chishtis were 'moderate' mystics and in excessive passion for asceticism they saw temptation and arrogance, so incompatible with their propagation of humble and selfless service to God and His creatures. Encouraging the self-restraint which is obligatory for a mystic, they nevertheless did not allow it to exceed the limits of the rational; from their point of view extreme asceticism ran counter to divine Providence and human nature, hampered fulfilment of religious law and simply attracted idle curiosity to itself. Besides that, asceticism in the form of self-torture was associated in the eyes of Muslims with wandering ascetics (*sādhū*) and members of an esoteric sect of Naths whom Sufi literature calls by the collective term *jogī*.

The system of asceticism (*tapas*) practised by them, including the famous 'standing between five fires' (i.e. between four bonfires and under the parching midday sun), evoked a persistently negative response from Sufi authors, suspecting in Hindu *tapas* a means of acquiring supernatural power, in other words an endeavour to compete with God.

Having become an ascetic (*zāhid*), Farid to some extent violated the principles of his *silsila*. The albeit apocryphal and fabricated *malfūẓāt* which describe not so much his spiritual perfection as his physical self-tortures mean that those Sufis were right who considered that asceticism attracts the unnecessary attention of the 'simple folk' to the feats of the body to the detriment of spiritual feats. Thus, *Gulzār-i abrār* and *Jawāhir-i farīdī* are full of stories about what exactly Shaikh Farid fed on, because in the course of many years he ate practically nothing. One of the main relics of the *dargāh* in Pakpattan was the wooden pancake (*qurṣ-i chobīn*), a flat round board with gnawed edges which, according to the tradition, the saint used to nibble when torments of hunger became intolerable. Indirect confirmation of the fact that this relic is not a latter-day invention is to be found in Farid's own poetry:

> *pharīdā rot'ī merī kāt'ha kī, lāvañu merī bhukkha*
> *jinnhāṇ khādhī copaṛī, ghañe sahanhige dukkha*
> My bread is made of wood, and hunger is my salt,
> Those eating buttered bread will suffer pain's assault.
> (Shackle 1993: 270)

For the famous nickname *Ganj-i shakar* (Treasury of sugar) the saint is also indebted to the peculiarities of his 'diet'. In order to alleviate hunger during prolonged fasts, he used to stuff his mouth with

pebbles, which immediately turned into lumps of roasted sugar. At first Farid considered this miracle to be Satan's trick, but Qutbuddin reassured him, quoting a verse from Sana'i:

> *Sang dar dast-i tu gohar garda*
> *Zehr dar kām-i tu shakar garda*
> A stone turns into a pearl in your hand,
> The poison becomes sugar in your mouth.
> (Amir Khurd 1978: 67)

For that matter, even Qutbuddin, we may recall, is indebted for his nickname to a miracle connected with food-stuffs or rather with their absence. 'Stale bread' (*kāk*) and 'sugar' (*shakar*), which brought fame respectively to him and his disciple, are miracles of the same origin: these are the gustatory hallucinations of a starving man. Once the conversation has turned on Shaikh Farid's ration it should be noted that hagiographic literature has recorded it for us in full: the saint lived mainly on a soup made of the wild fruits of thorny bushes called *delah*, which his disciples used to gather for him. When Nizamuddin Awliya happened to be on duty in the kitchen he endeavoured to flavour this broth with a pinch of salt borrowed from others, which, as with incurring any other debts, was strictly forbidden to the *murīds*.[9] But the harmless deception could not escape the notice of the omniscient saint, and the soup flavoured with the 'iniquitous' salt was thrown away.

Farid used to subject himself to the most difficult form of fast, *ṣaum-i Dā'ūdī*, taking food one day and fasting the next day. On meat days in the evenings, at the time of *ifṭār*, he permitted himself to drink a cup of sherbet and eat a piece of oat bun with clarified butter (*g'hī*), ignoring his own prediction about the troubles which await those who eat bread with butter. Going by rural yardsticks, these tasty delicacies were taken from the *zanbīl*, the container made from a dried hollow gourd which the *murīds* used to take from house to house in the neighbourhood, asking for alms. Shaikh Farid preferred donations in kind instead of money and apparently this is why in the *khānqāh* the difficulties involving salt occurred because salt had to be bought for money.

Still more difficult than *ṣaum-i Dā'ūdī* was the *chillah*, a forty-day fast in complete seclusion. Farid requested his *murshid* to bless him for this asceticism a number of times, but was refused. Later, apparently, having decided to teach his stubborn disciple a lesson, Qutbuddin suggested that he should perform *chillah-i ma'kūs*, i.e.

an inverted *chilla*. In the fraternity of Chishtis such an ascetic practice was not popular; Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, on being asked whether *chillah-i ma'kūs* was lawful, had replied that he had not come across it in the books of *Sharī'at – dar kutub-i 'ilm-i ẓāhir nadīdam* (Nizami 1955: 25). This is exactly why certain Indian scholars saw in Shaikh Farid's asceticism the prevailing influence of Indian Yogi practice. However, Sufi sources, including *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*,[10] asserted that even the old man from Mayhana, Abu Sa'id b. Abul Khair (into whose tomb the miraculous pigeon used to fly) performed at the end of the tenth century *ṣalāt-i ma'kūs*, i.e. prayer, head foremost. In the eighteenth century Shah Waliullah referred to this practice in connection with Chishtiyya fraternity: 'And there is a namāz among the Chishtis, known as *ṣalāt-i ma'kūs*. We could not find any authority for it in the Traditions of the Prophet or in the sayings of the jurists. We therefore did not discuss it at all. Its legality or otherwise is known to God alone' (Nizami 1953: 145).

Obligatory conditions for performance of *chillah-i ma'kūs* were a mosque, a well and a tree by its side. The ascetic tied a length of rope to a branch of the tree and attached the other end to his leg. He then dived head downwards into the well. Thus, suspended in total darkness, he used to spend forty days and nights, without taking food and water. From time to time he was pulled outside (for which purpose some assistant's services were required), so that he could offer prayers in the mosque. It is not known whether Farid managed to find favourable conditions for his ascetic feats in Delhi, but rumours to the effect that he was preparing to subject himself to inverted fast evoked morbid excitement amongst visitors to the *khānqāh* in Mehrauli. This too apparently influenced Farid's decision to leave the capital and to look for a more secluded place.

Qutbuddin reluctantly and with tears let go his favourite *murīd*, having appointed him his successor and bequeathing to him a complete set of spiritual regalia, including *sajjāda* (prayer carpet), *khirqa*, *dastār* (turban), *na'lain-i chobīn* (wooden sandals) and '*aṣā* (staff), on which, instead of a pillow, Farid always rested his head.[11] Having left Delhi the saint moved to his native land Punjab. At first he stopped in a small town, Hansi, where he lived in the house of one of his first disciples, Jamaluddin Hansawi. It was here that his second fateful meeting in a mosque took place, this time with the anti-hero of medieval Muslim historiography, Nur-i Turk, who had in the year 1236 placed himself at the head of the insurrection of the Carmatians in Delhi. Surrounded by a crowd of his henchmen, Nur-i Turk, took notice of Farid, as always clothed in rags, and

respectfully bowed low before him.[12] During Shaikh Farid's long life a number of people, some even more powerful than Nur-i Turk, had bowed before him, but in his old age the saint used to recollect exactly the rebel's bow.[13]

From Hansi the saint moved to Ucch, where, near the deserted mosque of Masjid-i Hajj, and with the help of a *mu'adhdhin*, he at last realized his cherished dream and undertook *chillah-i ma'kūs* for forty nights. Before dawn the *mu'adhdhin*, holding the rope, used to pull him out of the well, so that the saint could perform his ablutions (*wuḍū'*) and offer morning prayers (*namāz-i ṣubḥ*) standing on the ground. It is not known how long this ascetic impulse continued: in *Jawāhir-i farīdī* 'Ali Asghar, with his inclination for fantastic hyperbole, asserts that Farid performed the inverted fast over a period of ten years. For that matter, according to his calculations, the saint lived for more than hundred and twenty years. In any case Shaikh Farid's *chillah-i ma'kūs* firmly went down in Chishtiyya tradition, and stories about it evoked the admiration of the audience for a long time to come. In the fifteenth century Muhammad Gesudaraz's disciples wondered why blood did not flow and food was not ejected from the eyes and mouth of the saint who had spent so much time suspended upside down. To which Gesudaraz reasonably replied that in the body of the saint, which had withered up almost to the state of a skeleton, there was no longer any such substance left which could flow out (Husaini n.d.: 231).

While Farid was giving himself up to mortification of the flesh, in the year 1236 Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki passed away during *samā'*. Farid had to place himself at the head of the orphaned fraternity and so returned to Delhi. However, life of a metropolitan *shaikh*, calling for certain diplomatic skills and a flair for politics, was a burden on the unsophisticated and somewhat provincial Punjabi. After Iltutmish's death in the same year, discords commenced in the midst of the Turkish military aristocracy, which were aggravated by general discontent with the enthronement of the late Sultan's daughter, Razia. All the *khānqāhs* in Delhi, to a greater or lesser extent, depended on the donations of the aristocracy and on the religious policy of the authorities. They were therefore compelled to side with some party in the court or influential private person. Inexperienced as Farid was in court intrigues, he still foresaw that in the conditions of dissidence and mutual hostility which had already begun it would not be possible for him to maintain strict neutrality. He preferred to relinquish the honorary authority of the head of the fraternity and leave Delhi, this time forever.

Quiet and peaceful Ajodhan, on the banks of the Sutlej, became the place where the saint was to spend almost thirty years of his life. Today, if you drive along the highway from Lahore to Multan, then take a turn half way along, in Sahiwal, and continue in the direction of the Indian border which passes near by, after 50 kilometres you will find yourself in former Ajodhan, now Pakpattan, near that very river crossing where Baba Farid's small mud-house stood many centuries back. Looking at the wide, and in these parts silvery, Sutletj, at the shady thickets of acacias in pink and white blossom, and at lush and green gently sloping hillocks on the horizon, you understand why the saint chose Ajodhan with its gentle and pacifying landscape. In contrast to Data Ganjbakhsh, Khwaja Mu'inuddin and his own preceptor, Shaikh Farid, had never crossed the borders of the subcontinent, and even within India he had travelled very little, limiting himself to Delhi and Punjab, and to Qandahar in Afghanistan.[14] Since wanderings in one's youth adorn a mystic's life, apocrypha ascribe to him travels from Baghdad to Ghazna, but these are merely legends, deserving no credit. It should not be forgotten that the final part of the saint's life coincided with Mongol conquests in Middle East, which were not conducive to travel.

Judging by the *malfūẓāt*, in the medieval period Ajodhan was far less attractive than in our times. 'The dark-complexioned tribes of pagans, illiterate, ill-tempered, superstitious and not believing in saints', inhabited it (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 188). However ill-tempered these tribes might have been, the saint got the better of them: not for nothing is the Islamization of the entire south Punjab put down to his credit.[15] No less challenging was the natural environment: the desert surrounding Ajodhan was teeming with snakes and wild beasts. (Pakpattan has acquired its present blooming appearance owing to a canal which was dug in the colonial epoch.) The saint's mother Qarsum-bibi was torn to pieces by beasts of prey in the neighbourhood of the town, and Farid himself was ill for a long time after being bitten by a venomous snake.

As we will recall from Khwaja Mu'inuddin's *manāqib*, hagiographic literature always depicts opposition to the saint's mission on the part of hostile forces, either occult or historical. Although Ajodhan was inhabited chiefly by pagan tribes, there existed a small Muslim community, which received the new saint with prejudice. The local *qāḍī*, envious of Shaikh Farid's popularity, maltreated his family and endeavoured to obtain an official *fatwā* against him from the higher '*ulamā* of Multan. When this did not materialize, he sent a hired assassin to Shaikh Farid, whose intentions the saint foresaw

in good time, thus escaping death. When the saint then fell seriously ill, it turned out that it was the ill-effect of witchcraft brought on him by the local sorcerer. Fortunately Nizamuddin Awliya and one of Shaikh Farid's sons succeeded in finding and rendering harmless the magic figurine made of dough, which the sorcerer had entangled in horse-hair and pierced with needles, in order that the victim should suffocate and suffer with acute pain.

Yet, in this inhospitable place, the saint found the long wished-for peace of mind and happiness which he had asked for in the following verse:

> *Az ḥaẓrat-i tu seh chīz mikhāham*
> *Waqt-i khūsh-o āb-i dīda-o rāḥat-i dil*
> My Master, three things I seek from You:
> Happy times, tears and peace of mind.
> (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 224)

The tears which the saint sought from God happened to be the most important element of the Chishti concept of tender emotional compassion. An ascetic-hermit, who renounces the world and is indifferent to people's passions, as has been mentioned already, was not the ideal of the Chishtis. It was incumbent upon a member of this fraternity to have a supersensitive heart, always full of sorrow for the imperfections of the world as a whole, and for the fate of an individual. This sorrow was not destructive, on the contrary it was gentle and sweet, since among the unfortunate it did not evoke protest or fury, but pacification and submission to God's will. A special role in the relations between the consoler and the distressed was assigned to shared tears with their well-known psychotherapeutic effect of solidarity and relief. The Chishtis' approach to the needs of the faithful was strictly individual, Shaikh Farid always reasoned to the crowd of people coming to him for help with the words: 'To come one by one is better than inviting the curse of the evil eye (when you come as a group)' (Amir Hasan 1992: 160).

In Ajodhan, the type of cloister which became typical of the subsequent development of the Chishtiyya fraternity took shape. It was different from the *khānqāhs* of other Sufi orders with their more developed infrastructure. Shaikh Farid built near the town mosque a small house of raw bricks (*kachcha*), consisting of one spacious room, *jamā'at khāna*, where *murīds* and visitors used to study, offer prayers and sleep. Only he occupied a separate *ḥujra*; here stood his wooden cot (*chārpā'ī*) with string net and beside it lay a prayer rug.

By nature of its organization, *jamā'at khāna* was a virtual commune: disciples by turns did the household work – from the collection of brushwood and the cooking of food to the washing of linen and utensils – no household servants were to be found there. The chief manager of this commune was Badruddin Ishaq, the son-in-law and subsequently one of the *khalīfas* of the saint; he also used to receive visitors and write *ta'wīdh*. The other *khalīfa*, who has already been referred to, Jamaluddin Hansawi, was a gifted poet and formerly a wealthy government official or *khaṭīb*, who relinquished his post and property for the sake of discipleship under the saint. He was responsible for the provision of firewood and food products to the fraternity. He was also entrusted by Shaikh Farid to sign *khilāfat-nāmas*, i.e. the documents regarding transfer of authority to a spiritual deputy. Water-carrier and washerman's responsibilities were fulfilled by the formerly well-to-do merchant Sayyid Mahmud Kirmani (Amir Khurd's grandfather). Nizamuddin Awliya, who lived permanently in Delhi and paid only flying visits to Ajodhan, occasionally used to cook food for the refectory, but more often the Shaikh preferred to enjoy his erudition, refined conversation and charm. He was the only inhabitant of the *jamā'at khāna* who was honoured with the permission to sleep on a cot – all the others irrespective of age and status slept on the floor.

Jamā'at khāna was open for visitors till midnight, and access to the saint was in no way restricted. Of course, the main stream consisted of peasants and inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, who came every day to obtain *ta'wīdh*. In contrast to the inhabitants of other *khānqāhs,* Shaikh Farid did not take money for amulets, and visitors used to pay with sweets and other small offerings. Nizamuddin Awliya recalls that when he had the occasion to write *ta'wīdh*, he used a hair fallen from the saint's beard as an amulet.[16]

Another category of visitors consisted of the sick, people with various complaints and those seeking protection. The saint was particularly considerate towards them and went into the circumstances of each of them in minute detail. Mainly healing the distressed with prayers and by the power of spiritual perfection, he did not deny to them even practical assistance and intercession before the authorities. Jamali narrates a didactic story about a tax collector who had incurred the wrath of the Governor of Ajodhan and who had had recourse to the saint's mediation. Suspecting that the supplicant was implicated in abuse of his powers, Farid nonetheless sent a request to the Governor for his pardon. When the response did not favour the tax collector, he was unhappy with the saint. Farid

told him: 'I appealed for you to the governor, but he has paid no attention to my request. May be, you have also, in your turn, been equally indifferent to the appeals of the unfortunate'. The tax collector repented and promised not to be harsh to anyone in future (Nizami 1955: 51).

The last and the most difficult group of visitors consisted of wandering *darwīshes*, *qalandars* and other persons laying claim to spiritual superiority. The ethics of the fraternities called for reception of such visitors with accentuated hospitality, giving them the best and, if necessary, even the last of one's belongings. Hagiographic literature narrates about instances when Sufis from poor cloisters had to sell a prayer rug or their wife's shawl in order to offer food to their spiritual brethren. Not infrequently the guests got annoyed, were capricious and conducted themselves intolerably. Once a *qalandar* burst into the saint's cell, seated himself on his *sajjāda* and started preparing a narcotic mixture. Indignant Badruddin Ishaq tried to prevent desecration of the place of prayer of the saint, and then the infuriated *qalandar* raised his alms bowl (*kachkol*) threateningly at him. Shaikh Farid intercepted his hand and apologized on behalf of his *murīd*, who had displayed insufficient tolerance and respect for the guest. The impudent stranger declared that as he had already raised his hand, he would not lower it halfway. 'So throw the *kachkol* at this wall', suggested Shaikh Farid. The *qalandar* hurled the bowl at the wall, which fell down immediately, and only then did he calm down (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 131).

In this instance, as always, the saint was guided by the basic Chishtiyya principles of peaceable meekness and boundless forbearance for human foibles.[17] He saw his main mission in reconciliation and pacification of people torn by discords and passions. If a devotee presented a pair of scissors to him he replied with a phrase which has now become proverbial: 'Do not give me scissors, give me a needle. I sew. I do not cut' (Nizami 1955: 2).

Sources of subsistence of the *jamā'at khāna* were extremely meagre. Chishtis did not allow members of the fraternity to be engaged in professional activity (*shughl*). Many of Shaikh Farid's *murīds* had to give up a scholar's career, a government post or their own commercial business, which would have brought an income to the cloister. Shaikh Farid somehow did not like the type of earnings accrued as a result of cultivation of *iḥyā*, which was allowed for a Sufi and was not scorned by Khwaja Mu'inuddin and Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori. He declined even land donations. When the powerful minister Ulugh Khan (later the Sultan of Delhi Ghiyathuddin Balban), having

visited Ajodhan, offered some money and the ownership of four villages to the saint, the latter said: 'Give me the money. I will dispense it to the dervishes. But as for those land deeds, keep them. There are many who long for them. Give them away to such persons' (Amir Hasan 1992: 196). It turns out that the only source of subsistence for the cloister were unasked-for donations or *futūḥ*, the regularity and extent of which could not be foretold. Since Shaikh Farid forbade the community to accumulate donations, keep them in reserve or lay anything up for a rainy day, because this supposedly violated the basic Sufi principle of setting one's hopes solely on God (*tawakkul*), all the offerings were instantly distributed among the poor. Once Badruddin Ishaq did not manage till the setting in of night to give away one gold coin as alms, which provoked a virtual fit of rage on the part of the saint, who could not fall asleep till the coin was thrown out of the bounds of the *jamā'at khāna*.

Apart from concerns for the brethren and visitors, the saint's overgrown family also caused him a certain problem. From three marriages Farid had many children, the majority of whom had died in infancy because of malnutrition. Children were growing up in conditions of extreme poverty, and from time to time one or the other wives interrupted the saint's meditation with the wail that her child has just now died of starvation. It is paradoxical, but Farid, endowed with universal responsiveness and ready to cry over the grief of anybody and everybody, did not give evidence of similar compassion for his own progeny. Amir Khurd narrates the saint's shocking, by our moral yardstick, reply to the mother of yet another child who was about to die: 'What can poor Mas'ud do? If it is how fate has willed it and he dies, tie his legs with a rope and throw him away, and then come back' (Amir Khurd 1978: 67). It is true that the hagiographer himself was not at all shocked by this reply; for him it rather served as an evidence of the fact that during divine service nothing temporal, even the death of a member of his family, could move the saint.

For that matter, even in this Shaikh Farid was following his murshid's example: Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki also did not care too much for his family, and when one of his sons passed away consoled the sobbing wife by telling her that had he come to know of the child's illness earlier, he would have prayed for his health. But the great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya fraternity did not burden themselves much with the care of even the surviving and grown-up children. Their education and upbringing was taken care of by tender-hearted neighbours and devoted *murīds*: thus, it was Nizamuddin Awliya who brought up and educated Shaikh Farid's son and grandsons.

This, for us, shocking contrast between unflagging kind-heartedness for strangers and an indifference, verging on cruelty, towards one's own relatives finds an unexpected echo in the Indian history of our own times, in the character of the modern saint Mahatma Gandhi, whose stern exacting attitude to his wife and children was so sharply at variance with his celebrated gentleness and love for the rest of the mankind.

In spite of an unhappy childhood, devoid of paternal indulgence, those of Shaikh Farid's children who managed to escape death from starvation in infancy grew up to become quite worthy people. Four out of the saint's five sons continued his work, propagating the teaching of Chishtis in Punjab. The fifth son, a soldier, served in the army of Ghiyathuddin Balban and died the death of a hero in a battle against the Mongols. The saint's three daughters, all of them widowed early, were also notable for high moral virtues. About one of them, Bibi Sharifa, her father used to say that had it been permissible for him to pass on spiritual inheritance, i.e. *khilāfat-nāma* and *sajjāda*, to a woman, he would have made them over to her without any hesitation. Another daughter of the saint, Bibi Fatima, after her husband Badrudin Ishaq's death, became the object of idle talk among the Chishtis. Since she, as many other members of Shaikh Farid's family, lived in the charge of Nizamuddin Awliya in his Delhi *khānqāh*, persistent rumours were spread about their possible wedding, which, however, was not confirmed.

Over all his sons and daughters, relatives and wives, however, Shaikh Farid undoubtedly favoured his adored disciple Nizamudin Awliya. Of all the *khalīfas*[18] it was to him that he bequeathed the sacred regalia of his predecessors and also the predominant status in the fraternity. The saint and his most talented *murīd* were interconnected through *murāqaba*, constant spiritual concentration on each other and intense emotionalism of companionship, which did not cease even after Shaikh Farid's death. This loving friendship of a mature man and a youth, quite in keeping with the sublime platonic relations that include a shade of homosexuality, which are widespread amidst Sufis, is marked by many romantic episodes. Nizamuddin Awliya, like the hero of an Eastern romance, lost his heart to his future preceptor from hearsay, having heard in his adolescence a *qawwālī* glorifying his virtues. Later, while being educated in Delhi, he found himself to be a neighbour of Najibuddin Mutawakkil, the younger brother of Shaikh Farid, whose accounts only accentuated the young man's passionate craving for a meeting with the saint of Ajodhan.[19] It turned out that this emotion was

reciprocal, because the gift of mystic clairvoyance had foretold a surprise visit of the young friend to the saint, and on meeting him for the first time he greeted Nizamuddin with the verse:

> *Ae ātish-i firāqat dilhā kabāb karda*
> *Sailāb-i ishtiyāqat jānhā khar̲āb karda*
> The flame of separation from you has burnt hearts into cinders
> The deluge of passion for you has laid souls to waste.
> (Amir Khurd 1978: 106)

Although Nizamuddin was far better educated than his *murshid* and, in contrast to the unsophisticated sage, was a refined intellectual, for his knowledge of people and an understanding of the secrets of spiritual life he is wholly indebted to Shaikh Farid, who possessed an inate wisdom. The latter kept him from the temptation of arrogance,[20] so characteristic of educated person at all times, having taught him one of his most important precepts: 'Acquire knowledge through humility'. When in the presence of the saint people extolled the erudition, eloquence and manners of his favourite, he used to joke that a *pīr* is only a *mashshāṭa*, a maidservant beautifying an even otherwise beautiful bride.

Lying on his death-bed, Shaikh Farid had his thoughts riveted on Nizamuddin Awliya, called him all the time and complained to his associates that in his time he himself had been late to the death-bed of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, thereby depriving himself of the happiness of seeing his favourite disciple by his side during his hour of death. Referring to his favourite son, also Nizamuddin by name, who was an officer in the Sultan's army, Baba Farid said in his last moments: 'He is coming to me, but what is the use of it, if I would not go out to meet him?' (Amir Khurd 1978: 90–1). As can be seen, hagiographic literature is capable of being as dramatic and intensely emotional as the best specimens of fiction.

For that matter Shaikh Farid was one of the first mystic poets in the subcontinent whose literary activity manifestly exceeded the limits of operative Sufi poetry as an allegorical expression of spiritual experience, ineffable through other verbal means. Farid has left a considerable number of verses in Persian, later somewhat artificially collected into a *dīwān*, and a separate corpus of couplets in modern Indian dialects (Multani and Khari Boli), whose fate is unique in their own way. One hundred and twelve couplets, the so-called *salokas* included in the 'primordial' book of Sikhs *Ādi Granth* (compiled

in 1604) are ascribed to Farid. Thereby he is the only Muslim (not counting Kabir, who, all the same, has to be regarded as belonging to the Indian *bhakti* tradition) whose literary output became a part of the scripture of people of another faith.

The prevailing tendency on the part of Sikh Gurus, and subsequently Punjabi scholars, to ascribe the section of *Ādi Granth*, called *Saloka Pharīda* or *Farīd-bāṅī*, to Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar considerably lengthened the age of the Punjabi literary tradition in comparison with other modern Indian literatures, taking it back to the thirteenth century.[21] At the same time it is impossible to assume that the early Sufi hagiographers (Amir Hasan, Amir Khurd, Hamid Qalandar and Jamali Kanboh), who have narrated details of the saint's life and activity so extensively, would not have said even a word about the existence of *Farīd-bāṅī* in their works. Less popular, but more reliable is the version according to which *Farīd-bāṅī* dates from the sixteenth century and is attributed to Shaikh Ibrahim Farid Thani (i.e. to the 'second' Shaikh Farid), a descendant and twelfth *sajjādanishīn* of the saint. However, indirect evidence in favour of earlier authorship of *Farīd-bāṅī* is its obvious thematic and stylistic influence on the verses from the same *Ādi Granth*, belonging to the founder of Sikhism Guru Nanak (1469–1539) himself. It is interesting that Nanak more than once called himself *sāiru*, from Arabic *shā'ir* ('poet') and not the Indian equivalent *kavi*, which gives an indication of some Muslim model of his creative work, possibly Farid's poetry. 'Unless this is to be understood as referring to exclusively to poets writing in Persian, it suggests the contemporary existence of a class of Muslim vernacular poets' (Shackle 1993: 276).

Saloka Pharīda from *Ādi Granth*, as far as metre is concerned, resembles *dohā* (13+11 *mātrās* per line with a final disyllabic rhyme) and is, like *dohā*, ideally suitable for mnemonic practice and oral transmission. As far as their contents are concerned *salokas* are variations on the theme of *memento mori*, widely used in Indian as well as Muslim gnomic poetry:

> *pharīdā piććhalī rāti na jāgiohi, jīvadaṙo muiohi*
> *je taiṇ rabbu visāriā, ta rabbi na visāriohi*
> Night ends, but still you sleep; you die while living yet,
> Though you forget the Lord, still He does not forget.
> (Shackle 1993: 273)

This couplet serves as an example of how Arabic doctrinal vocabulary was gradually finding its way into the Indian poetical forms, adapting

itself to their prosody and to the phonetics of the modern Indian languages, which is characteristic of the early stage of the formation of Sufi poetry in the vernacular languages. The key word in this *saloka* is the Arabic loan-word *rabbu* (the Lord). In another *saloka* words from the same lexical series, *Azrā'īl farishta*, the Angel of Death in Islam, are found to be semantically loaded:

> *pharīdā bhannī gharī savannavīṇ, t'ut't'ī nāgara lajju*
> *ajarāīlu pharesatā, kaiṇ ghari nāt'hī ajju*
> The lovely pot is broken, its rope has frayed away,
> In whose house is Azrael a guest today?
> (Shackle 1993: 274)

Following the same pattern, that is, by the introduction of Muslim doctrinal terms into the Gujarati metric composition *bhujaṅgī*, associated with spiritual singing (*bhajan*) of Hindus, a new genre *nasīhat* (exhortation), widely used in the medieval literature of *Ismā'īlī Bohrās*, was 'incorporated' into the Gujarati literature. At the same time an indigenous term *jāpa* (*nām jap*), meaning multiple repetition of the deity's name or a mantra, is regarded here as identical with the Muslim *d̲h̲ikr*:

> *Ae dil tuṃ nām jap hirde khudānā*
> *Na hargīj baith qaim mile havānā*
> The name of khudā is to be repeatedly uttered in the heart.
> Do not sit idle even for a moment.
> (Jani 1994: 230)

Assimilation of the Sindhi traditional genre form *tuṇvero* by Muslim mystics and its transformation into the Sufi genre of *bait* also took place in a similar manner. One of the forefathers of the Sindhi mystic poetry, 'Abdul Karim Bulri (1536–1624), introduces the Arabic word *rūḥ* (spirit) in its Sufi context (spirit as the organ for comprehension of God) into the figurative texture of folk song:

> *pāṅīhārī siri b̲ehaṙo, jara te pakkhī jīaṇ*
> *assāṇ sajjaña tīaṇ, rahiyo āhe rūḥa meṇ*
> A water-maid's twin pots, or on the lake the geese:
> As close as these He dwells, my loved One in my soul.
> (Shackle 1993: 280)

And in the verses of *Farīd-bāṅī* also the images of folk songs are used, depicting the actualities of Punjab countryside: a desolate, flat

landscape, lakes with wild geese (apparently, a widely used motif even in Sindhi poetry), a broken pitcher by the well, or so typical for Ajodhan, a figure of a *pātańī* (ferryman):

> *pharīdā dukkhāṇ setī dihu gaīā, sūlāṇ setī rāti*
> *khaŕā pukārai pātańī, beŕā kappara vāti*
> In pain the day is spent, in grief the night is passed.
> 'On the shoals,' the sailor cries, 'the boat is now stuck fast'.
>
> (Shackle 1993: 272)

Farid's poetry in Persian, of course, is not a mirror image of his poetic output in Multani, using the devices of another language, or, for that matter, even the other way round. Apparently, even the poet himself clearly felt this difference, using in his Persian verses the *takhalluş* 'Mas'ūd' and in Multani verses referring to himself as 'Farīd' ('Pharīd'). This dissimilarity might have been determined by the changing tasks of South Asian Sufism at various stages of its development. In Mas'ud's words speaks Shaikh Fariduddin, the Muslim mystic of the period of the consolidation of Islam in the subcontinent. He addresses all the faithful and thinks in images of a cosmopolitan lingua franca, widely used in all places and understood by the Muslim community as a whole. In Pharid's language preaches Baba Farid, popular Punjabi saint, whose message is addressed to a limited social environment, which was already conscious of its ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. In all appearances, it was exactly this pronounced linguistic-cultural specificity, characteristic of the later period of development of Islam in South Asia, which was conducive to the inclusion of *Farīd-bāńī* in *Ādi Granth*, the scripture of an ethnically defined religious community.

On the fifth day of Muharram of the year 1265 Shaikh Farid passed away with the pious exclamation '*Yā Ḥayy Yā Qayyūm*' (O Living, O Eternal!) on his lips. The cause of his death was *khalah* – this was the collective name of various fatal maladies of the bowels, causing acute pain or colic. Neither the family nor the fraternity had enough money to procure a shroud for him. A matter of deep pride for Amir Khurd, the author of *Siyar al-awliyā*, was the fact that his grandmother Bibi Rani made a donation of her only remaining shawl, which was used to cover the mortal remains of the saint. Shaikh Farid was buried near his own *khānqāh* in a modest tomb made of bricks, and it was only considerably later, in the middle of the fourteenth century, that Sultan Muhammad Tughluq erected a marble tomb at its place.

It was in this epoch that the cult of the veneration of the saint became widely popular all over the Delhi Sultanate. Even Timur, who swept past Punjab like a hurricane, left Ajodhan alone and considered it necessary to pay obeisance to Shaikh Farid's tomb. The credit for it mainly goes to the saint's grandson, Shaikh 'Ala'uddin, who for more than half a century held the post of *sajjādanishīn* and won the respect of the Delhi sultans and was referred to in highly complimentary terms by his famous contemporaries – Amir Khurd, Barani and Ibn Battuta. The latter, in particular, narrates that Muhammad Tughluq granted a hundred villages as *in'ām* for sustenance to the descendants (including 'Ala'uddin) of the great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya and Suhrawardiyya orders. It means that the traditions of non-collaboration with the authorities did not continue in the fraternity for long.

With the passage of time Shaikh Farid's life acquires a halo of incredibly fantastic stories about the miracles supposedly performed by him. Later works, which, of course, have to be taken as contrived ones, ascribed to him all sorts of supernatural capabilities – from the ability to fly to resurrection of the dead (it is interesting why in that case the saint did not resurrect his own mother and children). It is exactly in this capacity that Shaikh Farid attracted unexpected attention of the marginal groups of society, particularly, of *thugs*, who considered him to be their patron. In the practice of veneration of his tomb, rituals also make their appearance, and are connected with magic and pre-Islamic beliefs.

The most well known of such rituals is that of passage through *Bihishti Darwāza* (Gateway to Paradise). This is the name given to the lateral door leading into the saint's tomb, which is opened only at the time of his '*urs*, celebrated on the fifth of Muharram. The width of the doorway is approximately seventy centimetres but then its height is not more than ninety centimetres, so one can pass through the door perhaps only by crawling. The difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that on the '*urs* days *Bihishti Darwāza* is stormed by thousands of pilgrims, mercilessly pressing each other in order to force one's way forward. However, the attendants of the *dargāh* assert that by the grace of the saint not a single pilgrim has as yet seriously suffered in this crush. Captain C. M. Wade, who visited Pakpattan in 1832, observed not without irony: 'A superlative heaven is allotted to those who are first to enter the tomb on the day mentioned. The rush of precedence may, therefore, be better imagined than described' (Nizami 1955: Appendix E).

The ritual of distribution of consecrated food, a version of Hindu *prasād*, also makes its appearance in the cult of Farid Baba. In the

days of *'urs* attendants of the *dargāh* distribute *jillā*, i.e. small cakes covered with a layer of *ḥalwā* amongst pilgrims. The origin of this rite is linked to the conversion to Islam of Punjabi fishermen of the *Jalhora* caste, which considers Baba Farid to be their patron saint. The tradition says that the fishermen came to Ajodhan in order to adopt the true faith, and, according to the custom of their forefathers, brought all sorts of gifts to the saint as earlier they used to present to Hindu priests. But Baba Farid declined all the offerings with the exception of the sweets, which were made by women of the *Jalhora* (*Macchi*) caste. One piece of *jillā* is reverentially eaten by the pilgrim himself and a few other pieces are kept by him carefully, to be taken to the kinsfolk, so that they may also partake of a part of the saint's bliss.

Beginning with Shaikh Farid the concept of sainthood in South Asian Sufism underwent a certain development: now miracles of humaneness, wrought by a compassionate heart, are considered to be true *karāmāt*. The degree of sainthood is increasingly measured by the criteria of personal asceticism and selflessness. The image of the stern Sufi, inspiring fear and punishing disobedience, is gradually excluded from the stage of 'enlightened' cultured Sufism and relegated to the dark periphery of the popular cults of the lower social strata.

Amir Khurd reports that Shaikh Farid's disciples had collected five hundred of his statements, which became the precepts of the Chishtiyya fraternity (true, in his book he quotes only sixty of them). Among these maxims there many which are downright Christian in spirit: 'Doing good to others, think, that you are doing good to yourself', 'If you want to make the whole world your enemy, strengthen your pride', 'Do not abase yourself trying to retain high status', 'If you desire greatness, associate yourself with the humble'. These thoughts of wisdom, sounding somewhat abstract in the remote corner of Punjab, became topical for the spiritual successors of the saint, Nizamuddin Awliya and Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, when they had to protect their right to do good to others from the arbitrariness of the state. The role of Shaikh Farid in the spiritual and social life of the period was lovingly described by his favourite disciple Nizamuddin Awliya:

> Despite his longing for solitude, there was no limit to the number of people who were forever visiting him. The door to his hospice was never closed . . . Silver and food and blessings due to the kindness of the Almighty Creator – all were distributed from there to the comers. Yet no one

came to the Shaykh for material assistance since he himself possessed nothing. What a marvellous power! What a splendid life! To none of the sons of Adam had such grace previously been available.

(Amir Hasan 1992: 166)

5

THE PEACEMAKER OF DELHI

It is difficult to name a socio-cultural sphere on which Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya (1242–1325) might not have exerted ennobling influence, whether it is religion, politics, education, literature, music or, above all, the style of human relations. It is not only the eminent hagiographers, Amir Hasan Sijzi, Amir Khurd, Hamid Qalandar, 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi, Dara Shikoh and others[1] who have written accounts of Nizamuddin Awliya's life; most of the historians of the Delhi Sultanate have also written profusely about him.

The eminent historiographer Zia'uddin Barani stands testimony in *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī* ('Chronicles of Firoz Shah') to the saint's all-pervading influence on the society contemporary to him:

> Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din had opened wide the doors of his discipleship . . . and admitted (all sorts of people into his discipline) nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, citizens and villagers, soldiers and warriors, freemen and slaves and these people refrained from many improper things, because they considered themselves disciples of the Shaikh; if any of them committed a sin, he confessed it and vowed allegiance anew. The general public showed an inclination to religion and prayer; men and women, young and old, shop-keepers and servants, children and slaves, all came to say their prayers . . . Many platforms with thatched roofs over them were constructed on the way from the city to Ghiyathpur;[2] wells were dug, water-vessels were kept, carpets were spread, and a servant and a *hafiz* was stationed at every platform so that people going to the Shaikh may have no difficulty in saying their supererogatory prayers . . . Owing to the influence of the Shaikh, most of

> the Mussalmans of this country took an inclination to mysticism, prayers and aloofness from the world and came to have a faith in the Shaikh. This faith was shared by ‘Ala-u’d-din and his family. The hearts of men having become virtuous by good deeds, the very name of wine, gambling and other forbidden things never came to any one’s lips . . . Out of regard for one another the Mussalmans refrained from open usury and regrating (*iḥtikār*), while the shop-keepers, from fear, gave up speaking lies, using false weights and deceiving the ignorant . . . In short God had created the Shaikh as a peer of Shaikh Junaid and Shaikh Bayazid in these later days and adorned him with that divine love which cannot be understood by human wisdom. The virtues of a Shaikh – and the art of leading men (in the mystic path) found their fulfilment and their final consummation in him.
>
> *Z-īn fan matalab nāmī*
> K*ān khatm shodast bar-i Niẓāmī*
> Do not try to obtain eminence in this art
> For it has come to an end with Nizami.
> (Nizami 1955: 75–7)

Even making allowance for exaggeration, characteristic of medieval historians, it is obvious that Nizamuddin Awliya played a unique role in Delhi around the end of thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries. Thus, when in the year 1299 the army of Mongols under Qutlug Khoja’s command came up to the wall of the capital, its inhabitants rushed to Ghiyathpur to seek protection in Shaikh Nizamuddin’s *khānqāh*, so great was their faith in the saint’s omnipotence. Following the doctrine of his order, Nizamuddin Awliya spent his entire life in intentional and voluntary poverty. However, the situation in Ghiyathpur, located close to the capital, was very different to the conditions in out-of-the-way Ajodhan: although Baba Farid’s *murīds* were short of money even for salt, *futūḥ* (unasked offerings) came in an endless stream to the cloisters of the saint of Delhi, and was used by Shaikh Nizamuddin wholly on the establishment of schools and hospitals for the poor and on assistance to those who had lost all their possessions in a fire or to peasants affected by drought.

The Shaikh explained his philanthropic activities purely on religious grounds:

> There are two forms of devotion. One is mandatory (*lāzimī*), the other is supererogatory (*muta'addī*).[3] Mandatory devotion is that from which the benefit is limited to one person, that is, to the performer of that devotion, whether it be canonical prayers, fasting, pilgrimage to Arabia, invocations, repetitions of the rosary, or the like. But supererogatory devotion is that which brings benefit and comfort to others, whether through the expenditure of money or demonstration of compassion or other ways of helping one's fellow man. Such actions are called supererogatory devotion. Their reward is incalculable; it is limitless.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 95)

By nature Shaikh Nizamuddin was endowed with a gentle and pliant disposition alien to vanity and arrogance, possessed the healthy temperament of a sanguine person, a majestic appearance and, finally, innate artistry, which to a large extent was the secret of his all-conquering charisma. The feats of asceticism performed by Baba Farid left him indifferent, although, in contrast to his *murshid*, he observed celibacy till the end of his days. Probably, this required self-abnegation of a high degree, because Nizamuddin was remarkably handsome: tall, slender, light-complexioned, with beautiful curly hair (which led Baba Farid to exempt him from having his head shaved, obligatory during the ritual of initiation). In spite of his celibacy he was not indifferent to women's virtues, and treated women of his immediate environment with touching tenderness and chivalry. The Shaikh used to say:

> Renouncing worldliness (*tark-i dunyā*) does not mean, for instance, that one becomes naked, wearing only a loin cloth and sitting (in solitude). Renouncing worldliness means, instead, to wear clothes and to take food while at the same time keeping in continuous use whatever comes to hand, feeling no inclination to hoard and no attachment to material objects. That [disposition alone] is tantamount to renouncing worldliness.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 88–9)

Nizamuddin preached that there is no necessity whatsoever for asceticism and mortification of the flesh, if a man concentrates only upon God, and makes use of worldly goods without any personal interest, but only for sustenance of life or the fulfilment of duty (for

example, duty to one's family) as enjoined by religion.[4] Possession of private property, high social status and success in life, in the opinion of the saint, only consolidate a man's links with the material world, whereas he should live without too much baggage, i.e. he should manage with the minimum, and should make a donation of the surplus to the needy. With respect to earthly blessings and, in the first place, to wealth and worldly fame, the Shaikh divided mankind into three categories: first, those who thirst for these blessings and spend all their days in their pursuit; second, those who reject all mundane comforts and consider the world itself to be hostile; and, finally, the most worthy of the lot, those who display neither hostility nor attachment to this world.

In other words, Nizamuddin stood on the Path which would be regarded as 'middle' in all respects. He himself, of course, belonged to the last category, never running after fortune but also not condemning this aspiration among others. Thus, to the puzzling question of a former schoolmate, who had become a successful *qāḍī*, as to how he, i.e. Nizamuddin, who was studying so hard to become a *faqīh*, did not feel ashamed to wear patched up cast-off clothes, the saint replied with calm dignity:

Na hamrahī tu marā rāh-i khēsh gīr birau
Torā sa'ādat bādā marā nigūnsārī
Our ways are different, be off and follow your path.
Let success fall to your lot, and failure – to mine.
(Amir Khurd 1978: 239)

The Shaikh developed the Chishti concept of non-violence into a doctrine of socio-religious tolerance and pacifism. He refused to extend moral support to the policy of the expansion of the Delhi Sultans, which turned out to be the actual cause of his conflict with the authorities. When the Shaikh's associates Amir Khusrow, Amir Hasan Sijzi and Zia'uddin Barani, who were in court service, compiled chronicles and wrote odes eulogizing the military victories of the Sultans, he avoided their direct criticism, but in his usual manner of allegorical admonition used to reiterate: 'If someone puts a thorn [in your path] and you put a thorn [in his], there are thorns everywhere' (Amir Hasan 1992: 180).

The exhortation, so familiar to us from Christian teaching, to love our enemy permeates the entire *malfūẓāt* of the saint. He used to say: 'It is like this among men, that you are straight with those who are straight with you and crooked to those who are crooked. But among

dervishes, it is like this, that you are straight with those who are straight with you, and with the crooked, you are also straight!' (Amir Hasan 1992: 181).

Shaikh Nizamuddin linked the inclination for violence and revenge with man's bestial self (*nafs*), and peaceful disposition and tolerance with his spiritual heart (*qalb*). If people or nations who happen to be under the influence of *nafs* run into each other, endless strife is inevitable. However, if the corroding action of *nafs* is met with the neutralizing counteraction of *qalb*, then enmity dies out, like acid neutralized by alkali. According to Nizamuddin forgiveness is spiritual sublimation, expulsion of all dark passions and unregulated emotions. 'If there be trouble between two persons, one of them should seize the initiative and cleanse himself of ill thoughts toward the other. When his inner self is emptied of enmity, inevitably that trouble between him and the other will lessen' (Amir Hasan 1992: 191).

Like his predecessors in the fraternity, Nizamuddin‘s relations with the high and mighty of this world were strained, but they were spoiled once and for all after the accession of Ghiyathuddin Tughluq (1320–5) to the throne. The problem was that the preceding Sultan, Nasiruddin Khusrow (the same Khusrow Khan Barwar, a low-caste Hindu converted to Islam, who had usurped the throne as a result of a coup, and who ruled for less than a year), had sent 500 thousand *tankā* to the Shaikh as *futūḥ*, which were accepted by him and distributed to the last coin for charitable purposes. The new Sultan, however, declared all the financial operations of the usurper to be illegal and demanded of the Shaikh a return of the money into the treasury.

The saint replied to this with a firm refusal, declaring that in a Muslim state treasury belonged to the faithful: money was taken from them and was returned to them. Unable to bring influence to bear upon the Shaikh by force, the Sultan manipulated displeasure of a section of the ‘*ulamā* against him, who on pretext of the age-old problem of permissibility of *samā*‘, convened a religious assembly *maẓhar* and tried to turn it into a court for trial of the Shaikh.

In the *maẓhar* Nizamuddin quoted a *ḥadīth* in his defence, however, the *qāḍī*, Ruknuddin Walwalji who was hostile to him, interrupted him declaring that the Shaikh was not a *mujtahid*, i.e. a theologian having the right to decide questions of faith independently and so could not cite *ḥadīths* as an argument. Although the *maẓhar* came to an end with the failure of the party hostile to the Shaikh, the latter nonetheless felt deeply offended, mainly, by the disrespectful

attitude of the ’*ulamā* towards the Prophet’s *Sunna*. And it was then that in a state of mind far removed from gentle mildness, he predicted terrible ordeals and devastation for Delhi. As is generally known, this prophecy did not take long to come true during the reign of Ghiyathuddin’s son, known to us as Muhammad bin Tughluq.

The most well-known prediction of the Shaikh made in connection with the conflict between him and Ghiyathuddin Tughluq had an equally dismal consequence. The latter, having failed to defeat the Shaikh by manipulating the ‘*ulamā*, decided to exile him from the capital. Setting off to Lakhnauti on a military expedition, he issued a *farmān*, according to which eighty-years-old Nizamuddin was directed to leave Delhi by the time the Sultan returned there. It was then that the saint uttered the famous phrase which became a popular saying: ‘It is still far away to Delhi’ (*Hanūz Dillī dūr ast*).[5] Really, the Sultan’s return journey to the capital ended in disaster – in Afghanpur the pavilion, erected in a hurry for the court reception, collapsed upon him. Ghiyathuddin was brought to Delhi in an unconscious condition, where he soon after died. It has to be said that modern scholars regard this episode of the saint’s life as merely a legend, considering that nurturing such an evil intent, even if so indirectly expressed, was absolutely not in keeping with his nature.

Once the conversation has turned to the saint’s relations with the state, then their contradictions and inconsistency also have to be noted. He invariably rejected the donations of the legitimate Sultan, Jalaluddin Tughluq, whereas for some reason accepted *futūḥ* from the time-server and usurper Nasiruddin Khusrow. Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Khalji (1296–1316), who had done a lot for the consolidation of Islam, turned Ghiyathpur into a thriving suburb of the capital, since he sincerely believed in Nizamuddin’s sainthood and tried his best to win his favour. In doing so he ran across the saint’s stubborn resistance. The Shaikh did not even open ‘Ala’uddin’s letter, handed over to him by prince Khizr Khan, telling him that the Sultan should be informed that:

> We dervishes have nothing to do with matters of state. I have taken up residence as far away as possible from the townsfolk and spend all the time praying for the Sultan and the faithful. If it is not to the Sultan’s liking, let him just tell me. I will go away and take up residence somewhere else. There is enough room in God’s world.
>
> (Amir Khurd 1978: 167)

At the same time Nizamuddin consented to accept two of the Sultan's sons – Shadi Khan and Khizr Khan – as his *murīds* (the latter even became his favourite). In honour of the initiation of the princes the Sultan held a luxurious reception in the *khānqāh* and showered gifts upon the dervishes, which were graciously accepted. 'Ala'uddin's successor, Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji (1316–20), who won the battle for the throne, harboured inimical feelings towards the Shaikh because of the support rendered by him to his brother, Khizr Khan.[6] Mubarak Shah used to speak sharply against the saint in *darbār*, and even tried to send hired assassins to him. He promised a reward to whoever brought him the Shaikh's head, and forbade his courtiers to visit Ghiyathpur. But Nizamuddin's fame had created a peculiar immunity for him, and the courtiers, apparently, did not take much notice of the ban imposed by the depraved and cruel ruler.[7] Contemporaries privy to Nizamuddin Awliya's predictions could claim that the Sultan's ignominious death had been foretold.

We also know of the following story from Barani's chronicles. Mubarak Shah built a palace mosque Masjid-i Miri and ordered that all the '*ulamā* and Sufi *shaikhs* of the capital should present themselves there for the weekly congregational prayers. Nizamuddin ignored the Sultan's order, justifying his refusal by the argument that on Fridays all the poor of Delhi gathered together in his Ghiyathpur mosque, and they needed him as *imām* more than the Sultan, who, even without him, had at his disposal many '*ulamā* and Sufis. For one of the prayer assemblies in the Sultan's mosque the Shaikh sent his trusted servant Iqbal, thereby infuriating Mubarak Shah still more. He threatened Nizamuddin with punishment if he did not present himself for the Friday prayers (*ṣalāt al-jum'a*) on the first day of the next month. In response to this threat the Shaikh is supposed to have dejectedly observed that a dismal end awaits the person who wants to deprive the faithful of their leader at a prayer meeting. And, it is true, the Sultan did not live to see the first day of the next month – the day before, he was killed by his favourite Khusrow Khan Barwar.

Nizamuddin Awliya also made quite a few happy predictions, which promised success and prosperity. Thus, for example, he predicted to an unpretentious officer of the Sultan's army, Hasan Gangu, that he would be the founder of a new, powerful state, and, having given him a breadcrumb pressed on one of his fingers, told him to take care of it as the banner of his future Sultanate (Nizami 1992: 38). And so it happened that after the Shaikh's death, in 1347, as a result of the revolt of the military aristocracy against the Tughluq dynasty, the

Bahmani kingdom was established in the Deccan, of which Hasan Gangu, who ruled under the title of ‘Ala’uddin Hasan Bahman Shah, became the first Sultan. Till the end of his life he looked upon his undreamed success as a gift from the saint, and, being a grateful man, showered the centres of Chishtis in Deccan with money and privileges. After the coronation he distributed four hundred pounds of gold and a thousand pounds of silver in charity in the name of Nizamuddin (Sherwani 1953: 56).

The dramatic ups and downs of the relationship with the Delhi Sultans should be ascribed not so much to some individual characteristics of the Shaikh’s nature, as to the lack of coincidence of Islamic theory with the practice of the authorities. Most of the rulers, being servicemen, pragmatic and spiritually not enlightened, did not correspond to the the theocratic ideal of a pious and just sovereign, whom Nizamuddin and his brothers would have liked to see on the throne. The Sultans primarily considered those things which were deemed external (*ẓāhir*): expansion of the state’s territories, of its protection from enemies and of maintaining social stability by strict military and political measures. Internal (*bāṭin*), moral and religious, questions were of interest to them only to the extent necessary for ensuring legitimacy of their rule. Generally speaking, under the conditions prevailing in the Delhi Sultanate it was almost impossible to pursue a consistent religious policy in the course of a single reign. The ideological vice sometimes unjustifiably contracted its jaws and sometimes, all of a sudden and just as arbitrarily, loosened its grip. The measure of religious rigidity depended on the stability of the Sultan’s position on the throne, on his expansionist ambitions, military successes or defeats or simply on his mood.

The Sultans of Delhi failed even to fully realize the official conception of *dīnpanāhī*,[8] or the defence of faith, not to mention the more flexible doctrine which took into account the interests of the Hindu majority and which the rulers of regional Muslim principalities were able to work out after the decline of the Sultanate. It is only natural that the Sufis could not expect anything from such an authority, whose arbitrariness could not be brought under control by any laws of the *Sharī‘at*: in the first instance this authority prevented the realization of their conception of social welfare, and also hampered the social work which generations of spiritual preceptors were carrying out amidst the people. That is why many mystics, including the Chishti *shai<u>kh</u>s*, deliberately refused to collaborate with the state – an attitude which at times seems to be biased or unpatriotic.

In contrast to his predecessors in the fraternity, Shaikh Qutbuddin and Baba Farid, who discontinued systematic religious education as soon as they took to the Path, Nizamuddin Awliya continued to study *fiqh* and ‘*ilm al-ḥadīth* even when he was already a mystic. By all the standards of his time he could be regarded as a real scholar and intellectual. In the religious circles of Delhi he was valued as an erudite *muḥaddith* and a brilliant polemicist, having the reputation of a ‘destroyer of assemblies’ (*maḥfil shikan*). Alas, at a mature age he was unable to give evidence of this latter talent, because Chishti ethics forbade participation in religious and philosophical discussions.

Throughout his life Nizamuddin was an ardent bookworm. He never parted with his vast library, which was a matter of particular pride for his *khānqāh* in Ghiyathpur. Side by side with ‘authentically passed on books’ (*kutub ẓāhirat ar-riwāya*) of Hanafi creed and vast Sufi literature, there were in this library not a few *dīwāns* of Arab and Persian poets and several manuscripts of the saint’s favourite book, *Maqāmāt* of al-Hariri. Since the daily routine in Nizamuddin’s *khānqāh* is known in detail thanks to Amir Hasan and Amir Khurd, it is evident that even at an advanced age the saint used to spend all the night through in reading. Fortunately even to old age he had preserved good eyesight, making it possible for him to decipher manuscripts by the light of a single candle, and, unfortunately, throughout his life he was a martyr to insomnia. Red and inflamed from night vigils, his eyes were the only detail which spoiled the Shaikh’s beautiful features.

Nizamuddin began studying *fiqh* and the science of *ḥadīth* in his native Badaun (now Uttar Pradesh), where he spent the first eighteen years of his life. Badaun had the reputation of a town of ‘*ulamā* – Sultan Iltutmish had established here one of the well-known *madrasas*, almost as good as the one in the capital. Here were born Raziuddin as-Saghani, compiler of *Mashāriq al-anwār*,[9] the most authoritative of the medieval South Asian collection of *ḥadīths*, Amir Hasan Sijzi, the outstanding historian ‘Abdul Qadir Badauni and many other celebrities. Nizamuddin often remembered his native town and in his speech used the dialect *Pūrbī*, common in Badaun (the eastern dialect of *Hindawī*). He even used to playfully assert that the vows made by him to God were expressed in *Pūrbī* verses.

Many Central Asian Sufis, members of *silsila-i Khwājagān* (predecessors of the Naqshbandiyya fraternity), had long since settled in Badaun. Both the grandfathers of the saint, natives of Bukhara, and also his father, Khwaja Ahmad, were associated with this order. The saint’s real name was Muhammad, but he became known to his

contemporaries and descendants by his family name Nizamuddin, to which his disciples and devotees added the grammatically odd nickname *Awliyā*, i.e. 'saints'.[10] Nizamuddin's father died when he was still an infant, and the boy's upbringing passed completely into the hands of his mother, Bibi Zulaikha. Just as in Baba Farid's biography, so it was in his disciple's life, that is an important role in the first initiation of the future saint to the emotional and internalized perception of faith fell to the lot of the mother.

If Qarsum Bibi, as we will recall, brought up Farid in truly Spartan spirit, without sentiments, Bibi Zulaikha represented a mother's image which is more comprehensible to us: loving, thoughtful and infinitely self-sacrificing. All the vital intentions of this woman were governed by maternal instinct: thus, being pregnant with Nizamuddin she had a prophetic dream, where a voice from the heavens told her to choose between husband and unborn son, since one of them was fated to die. Bibi Zulaikha unhesitatingly chose the son and the lot of a widow, which, to tell the truth, is unusual for a South Asian wife, who, being a Muslim, is not forbidden by faith to remarry. After all, the husband is the master and the ruler, and she could give birth to some more sons. But the choice was made, and Khwaja Ahmad passed away soon after the son's birth.

Acquiring the child in exchange for so heavy a sacrifice, Bibi Zulaikha literally trembled over him and dreamt only of her son getting an adequate education and becoming a *qāḍī*. That is why when Nizamuddin gave expression to his desire to study in the capital, where education was better but life was costlier, she without a moment's hesitation sold all of her property in Badaun in order to give him the opportunity. Since Nizamuddin did not acquire his own family, his mother lived with him till her very demise, which, undoubtedly, determined the special emotional closeness between them.

Deprived of the breadwinner and torn from its native roots, the family (Nizamuddin also had an elder sister) lived in awful poverty in Delhi; however, such a biblical poverty is commonplace in the lives of all the great Chishti *shaikhs*. However, the attitude to this poverty was special, even reverential, since the absence of any means of subsistence made it possible for a pious man to give evidence of *tawakkul* – complete trust in God. Later Nizamuddin recalled:

> My mother and other relatives starved together with me. Once we did not have anything to eat for three whole days, when a man with a tureen of porridgerice and split pulse

> (*k'hićaṛī*) knocked at the door. Nothing seemed to me to be so delicious as this *k'hićaṛī*, which appeared before me as if by some miracle. 'Today we are God's guests', my mother used to say every time when there was no food left in the house. From these words an inexplicable delight used to fill my heart, and I always wished to hear these words. If in our house there was shortage of food for several days, I used to wait impatiently when my mother will again utter this phrase.
>
> (Amir Khurd 1978: 113)

It is obvious that the saint got from his mother the lessons of emotionally joyful resignation to God's will in those circumstances when an ordinary mortal would have grumbled. In spite of the fact that the weekly income of the family was three *jitals* (going by the market prices of those times just a few buns could be purchased for one *jital*), Bibi Zulaikha contrived to engage the most brilliant teachers for her son. Later he used to say that he was lucky enough to have the best spiritual preceptor (*murshid*) and the best teacher (*mudarris*) of the epoch. And if the first one is undoubtedly Shaikh Farid, behind the figure of the second one was hiding the modest teacher from Badaun, Maulana 'Ala'uddin Usuli, the man of sense and erudition, under whose supervision the future saint not only mastered the basic manuals on Hanafi law, al-Quduri's *Mukhtaṣar* and al-Marghinani's *Hidāyat al-mubtadi'*, but also comprehended the general laws of intellectual knowledge and theological discourse.

While a student who might hope to become a *qāḍī* paid more attention to *fiqh*, the Sufis largely promoted the study of *ḥadīth*. In Delhi at various time Nizamuddin had a number of teachers, but he was most deeply influenced by Maulana Kamaluddin Zahid, with whom he learnt *Mashāriq al-anwār* by heart. It is interesting that the *ijāza*, the certificate given by Maulana Zahid to his pupil and bearing witness to his high qualification as *muḥaddith*, is dated 1280. If copyists have not made a mistake as to the date, it turns out that the Shaikh continued his studies for several years after becoming the head of a major fraternity and the most authoritative Sufi of Delhi. It should be noted that additional value to this certificate was imparted by the fact that Maulana Zahid happened to be a pupil of Maulana As'ad al-Balkhi, a pupil of Raziuddin as-Saghani, the author of *Mashāriq al-anwār*, so that getting the *ijāza* from him could be considered prestigious even for a mature theologian. Nizamuddin retained interest in the science of *ḥadīth* throughout his life; in his

khānqāh he often organized meetings, in which he retold and interpreted the Prophet's *ḥadīths* to the visitors.

As long as Bibi Zulaikha was alive, Nizamuddin persistently strove for the career of a Muslim judge. Doubt was cast on the correctness of the chosen path by his neighbour, the above-mentioned Najibuddin Mutawakkil. Having completed yet another stage of education Nizamuddin called on him and requested him to read the Surat al-Fatiha so that he could obtain the post of *qāḍī*. Najibuddin kept silent, and when the young man three times repeated his request, replied: 'Do not become a judge. Become something else!' (Amir Hasan 1992: 111). It is doubtful whether at that moment Nizamuddin could appreciate the sagacity of Shaikh Farid's brother, but later he used to recall this phrase as one that decided his fate.

After a few years' life in the capital, weakened by hunger and distressing anxieties, Bibi Zulaikha passed away.[11] Not wishing her son to be a witness to her agonies, she sent him away to the neighbours, telling him that she entrusted him to God's care. Later the Shaikh used to say that, had his mother bequeathed him a house full of jewels and gold, this would not have afforded him such a peace of mind and satisfaction as her last words on her death-bed. He buried her at a distance of one mile from Qutb Minar, in the hamlet of Uchchin, and till his extreme old age, as long as he could move about, he used to visit the place to pray at her grave. Probably, his passionate affection for his mother predetermined that deferential admiration with which Nizamuddin Awliya always spoke of women, something one rarely comes across in the religious literature of Muslims.

His mother's death probably became the most dramatic event in the Shaikh's external life; he continued to recall it even in his declining years. Quite often conversing with the disciples on spiritual subjects, in his mind he reverted to his loss. Thus, once explaining to his *murīds* how it becomes one to conduct oneself on the death-bed he told them: 'The sign of sincerity of faith is this, that the dying person at the moment of death becomes yellow, his forehead dotted with sweat. My mother at the time of her death expired with these very signs of good fortune on her face' (Amir Hasan 1992: 132).

Another time Nizamuddin, telling his disciples about a certain Ahmad, his friend of the days spent in Badaun, suddenly digressed from the subject and recollected how he had met this very friend in Delhi and told him about Bibi Zulaikha's death. 'The master – may God remember him with favor – when he came to this point of the story', writes Amir Hasan, 'also began to cry. So convulsed was he with tears that I could not make out what he was trying to say' (Amir

Hasan 1992: 135). This episode from *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* pertains to the year 1310, when the Shaikh was close upon seventy. In other words, he mourned over his mother even half a century after her death.

Left alone (by this time his sister was already married), Nizamuddin began to suffer from something close to depression, which changed the state of his mind and heart; that, which till recently seemed to him to be the summit of desires, lost all its meaning. Without baggage and provisions for the journey he set off to Ajodhan, where his new, real life began at Shaikh Farid's feet. Of course, at first he was disturbed by the thought that having gone through the initiation into the fraternity and having become a dervish, he would have to give up all that which he loved so much – books, manuscripts and intellectual pursuits.

However, Shaikh Farid put an end to his doubts: 'I never asked anyone to abandon formal education, although I myself did it, when I met a true preceptor. Knowledge is also necessary for a dervish. So do continue with spiritual discipline as well as with studies till one prevails over the other' (Amir Khurd 1978: 113). As we already know, Nizamuddin, as was his wont, chose the 'golden mean' – having devoted himself to spiritual service, he never gave up his favourite science, *'ilm al-ḥadīth*.

In 1265, when Shaikh Farid passed away, Nizamuddin was just twenty-three years old – a tender age even by the yardstick of the quickly maturing people of the medieval age. Why the ascetic of Ajodhan chose as his successor an inexperienced young man, a mother's darling, and not a mystic with considerable length of service and a mature father of a family, such as Badruddin Ishaq or Jamaluddin Hansawi, can partly be judged by the *khilāfat-nāma* given by the preceptor to his favourite. Shaikh Farid's *khilāfat-nāma* gave the new head of the fraternity vast authority and real power. Side by side with the enumeration of various merits of Muhammad bin Ahmad Nizamuddin it contains the phrases:

> While teaching him I found him capable, talented, well-behaved and goodmannered . . . *Niẓām-u'd-dīn is really my successor and deputy in things worldly and religious, and obedience to him is obedience to me*. May God be kind to them who show respect and honour to Niẓām-u'd-dīn, whom I honour and for whom I have great regard. If anyone does not respect him, may God disgrace him. All these words are from *faqīr* Mas'ūd.
>
> (Nizami 1955: 98–9)

Having become the head of the order, Nizamuddin actively set about the task of its expansion, sending his deputies and missionaries to all the towns and villages. If Shaikh Farid in the course of his entire life appointed only seven *khalīfas*, then his successor had seven hundred of them! Several hundred Chishtiyya *khānqāhs* were established all over South Asia during those sixty years or so when Nizamuddin Awliya was leading the order. Long before the time when Muhammad bin Tughluq decided to transfer the capital to strategically important Deogir, Nizamuddin, conscious of the role of the Deccan in the process of the consolidation of Islam in the subcontinent, sent his disciple Khwaja ‘Azizuddin there. Later an entire Chishti ‘landing force’ was disembarked in the Deccan. It is clear from the treatises, letters and commentaries of Muhammad Gesudaraz (he was a disciple of Nizamuddin’s deputy, Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli) that the fraternity’s teaching found a broad response in all the Sultanates and principalities of the Deccan.

Within a few decades the positions of Chishtis had become secure in Malwa, Gujarat, Kashmir and even in Kerala, which was not under the jurisdiction of the Delhi Sultanate. In Bengal the Chishtis managed to numerically challenge the Suhrawardis, who had been predominant in this region since the times of Jalaluddin Tabrizi, and to turn the towns of Bengal Lakhnauti and Pandua into important centres of the fraternity. In Sindh and Punjab the preaching of the Chishtis did not make any substantial progress – historically, right from the beginning these regions have formed a part of the *walāyat* of Suhrawardis and Qadiris. Nevertheless the heads of the competing orders rendered Nizamuddin his due in full measure: thus, the title of *Sulṭān al-mashā’ikh* (Sovereign of Spiritual Masters), by which he became known everywhere, was for the first time used with respect to him by the shaikh of the Suhrawardis, Ruknuddin Abul Fath (Baha’uddin Zakariya Multani’s grandson). It is worth noting here that, at the time of Nizamuddin’s burial, it was he, and not somebody from amongst the Chishtis, who led the funeral prayer.

The Shaikh constantly reverted in his discourse to the most debatable topic in Sufi literature, the question of miracles. He divided miracles into four categories –– *ma‘ūnat, istidrāj, mu‘jiza* and *karāmāt*. *Ma‘ūnat* are supernatural deeds, performed by the possessed (*majānīn* in a state of trance or temporary insanity) and *istidrāj* are false miracles, or rather, tricks of sorcerers and magicians, based not on faith, but on deception. *Mu‘jizat* are linked to the prophets, since they have been given perfect knowledge, and *karāmāt* are distinctive to saints (Amir Hasan 1992: 160). Belief is *karāmāt*, however, did

not prevent him from having a partly rationalistic attitude towards this phenomenon: 'Every action which the intellect can decipher – that is one thing, but every action which is impossible for the intellect to unravel – that is a miracle' (Amir Hasan 1992: 86).

At the same time the performance of *karāmāt* is fraught with the revelation of the Divine secret, which, as has already been mentioned more than once, rests on *awliyā* and up to a point hides their *wilāyat* from the mortals. Remembering the saints highly respected by him (Junaid, 'Abdul Qadir Jilani, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Sijzi, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Shaikh Farid, etc.), Nizamuddin used to add the phrase: ' May God sanctify his lofty secret!' 'Secret' in this context denotes a mystic's special relationship with God, known only to these two, which in the final analysis makes up the essence of sainthood. (Apparently, that is why it is so difficult for a third party to form an opinion about its basis!)

Presence of secret between a mystic and God distinguishes *wilāyat* from spiritual obligation and the limits of a saint's spiritual jurisdiction, or – *walāyat*.

> The saint possesses both *walayat* and *wilayat* at the same time . . . Everything such as this which takes place between the Shaykh and other peoples is called *walayat*. But that which takes place between the Shaykh and God is called *wilayat*. That is a special kind of love, and when the Shaykh leaves the world, he takes his *wilayat* with him. His *walayat*, on the other hand, he can confer on someone else, whomever he wishes, and if he does not confer it, then it is suitable for God Almighty to confer that *walayat* on someone. But the *wilayat* is the Shaykh's constant companion; he bears it with him (wherever he goes).
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 95)

If a mystic, out of vanity or rashness, of his own free will makes public his secret testament with God – and this transpires, when he, mostly in an 'intoxicated' state, or *sukr*, performs miracles – his mission comes to an end and it is no longer appropriate for him to remain in this world. 'Disclosing divine secrets and performing miracles (*karamat*) are actually a hindrance in the Path. For true devotees the real task is to be firm in the pursuit of love' (Amir Hasan 1992: 117). It is another matter if God himself slightly opens the veil of sainthood of his *walī* and grants him a miracle, so as to manifest through it some aspects of Divine providence. In that case the saint plays only the role of a passive medium, and commits no sin.

Of course, the Shaikh saw his mission not in performance of *karāmāt*, and reliable hagiographers do not even ascribe them to him.

> He was not a miracle-monger of ordinary sort. He never flew in the air or walked on water with dry and motionless feet. His greatness was the greatness of a loving heart; his miracles were the miracles of a deeply sympathetic soul. He could read a man's inner heart by a glance at his face and spoke the words that brought consolation to a tortured heart.
>
> (Habib 1937: 34)

Indeed, Amir Hasan cites not a few examples of how the Shaikh consoled his visitors, telling them simple stories about the saints of bygone ages, friends and acquaintances of his youth or, it would seem, quite abstract parables; in this he continued the traditions of Indo-Persian didactic literature. The moralizing purport of the story did not contain anything supernatural, but accentuated many times in the charismatic aura of the narrator's personality, it had a manifest psychotherapeutic effect on the hearer.

Generally speaking, the Shaikh's discourses from *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* bear resemblance to certain methods of modern psychiatry, in particular to the 'psychotherapy of shared emotional experience', which is used for the rehabilitation of victims of violence and catastrophes. Skilfully establishing an associative relationship between the cause of the 'patient's' suffering and the content of the discourse which followed, the Shaikh brings influence to bear upon the depressed psyche of the interlocutor indirectly and purely emotionally – he holds his hand, cries together with him, recollects something from his own experience, jokes, recites verses, but avoids point-blank touching upon the subject unpleasant to the man. He chooses no less a considerate approach towards sinners and disciples at fault, not disheartening them by his undoubted superiority.

Apparently, that is why the Shaikh's discourses always had a positive result. This happened, in particular, with Amir Hasan Sijzi, whose salary was withheld over a period of several months while he was in service in the Sultan's army. Not having any other sources of income, he felt extremely depressed, but felt shy of telling the Shaikh about his anxieties, considering them to be too material. But it was not surprising that Nizamuddin was a saint, capable of reading others' thoughts, and, besides, the institution of gathering information

in Sufi *khānqāhs* was always well organized. When on 19 September 1310 Amir Hasan Sijzi presented himself in Ghiyathpur so that, as usual, he could 'obtain the benefit of kissing the feet' of the Shaikh, the latter without asking any questions told him the parable about a Brahman.

Formerly this Brahman was wealthy, but then the chief magistrate of the city confiscated all of his property, and he fell into absolute destitution. Once an acquaintance came across him and enquired of him how he was getting on. The Brahman replied that he was absolutely happy. 'How can you be happy, since they have seized everything that you possess?', wondered the acquaintance. 'With me still is my sacred thread (*zunnār*)', exclaimed the Brahman.

> On hearing this story, I felt an inner contentment. I realized that the master had told the story to calm the heart of this helpless creature. He added, 'You should never experience distress on account of the interruption of your salary or the nonattainment of worldly goods. If the whole world passes you by, don't fret; you must maintain love of God at all times.' Praise be to God that I was able to grasp the context for this moral instruction that the master gave me!
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 145)

As we see, the Shaikh at first narrates a parable, relevant to Amir Hasan Sijzi's problem, and only subsequently, when he had somewhat calmed down, gives him direct didactic directions. However, not knowing the non-verbal context of this episode, i.e. not hearing the Shaikh's voice, not seeing his facial expressions, not feeling the atmosphere of this bygone *majlis*, it is difficult to explain why this simple story had so powerful an impact on such an elderly and experienced person as Amir Hasan Sijzi.

Outwardly, the Shaikh, as befitted a saint, produced an impression of a serene person. Once Khwaja 'Azizuddin repeated some idle talk to him: people say that the Shaikh has nothing to worry about, because whatever others obtain with great effort, comes to him by itself. To this the Shaikh replied:

> I am more unfortunate than any other mortal. A number of people come to me, narrating about their sufferings and anxieties. All this depresses my heart and soul. What kind of a heart is it, which listens to the trials and tribulations of Muslim brethren and remains indifferent? The dervishes,

> who have retired (from the world) to hills or forests, are free of such anxieties.
>
> (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 105)

Indeed, constantly having to deal with human misfortune, Nizamuddin at times felt extremely depressed. Since the aching nerve of compassion never calmed down in his heart, he continued to subject himself to privations and restrictions even during the years when his *k͟hānqāh* was flourishing (as it was in the reign of ‘Ala’uddin Khalji) and was able to feed the whole neighbourhood. He explained his refusal to eat and the sleepless nights by pointing out that so many starving people slept in nooks and corners of mosques or completely in the open that the mere thought of these poor creatures made him lose appetite and sleep.

Feeding of the hungry was given paramount importance and, indeed, ritual significance by the Shaikh. The Shaikh used to say: ‘Dervishhood consists of this: every visitor should first be greeted with “Peace!” (*salām*), then he should be served food, and then and only then should one engage in story telling and conversation’ (Amir Hasan 1992: 169). He considered one *dirham*, spent for special purpose, i.e. on food for the poor, more valuable than twenty *dirhams*, given as alms (*sadaqa*), prescribed by Shariat. For that matter, even the great mystics of Europe thought similarly: Meister Eckhart himself considered that giving a tureen of soup to a beggar was more important than sharing the apostle Paul’s ecstasy (Ruh 1985: 154).

In accordance with these tasks *langar* in the Shaikh’s cloister was organized on a large scale: in the communal refectory food was cooked for several thousand people at a time. The Shaikh’s favourite servant Iqbal (commonly known as Lalla) was in charge of the kitchen, and Burhanuddin Gharib looked after the distribution of food. Shaikh Nizamuddin’s *langar* has survived to this day: in the Delhi *dargāh*, in an enclosed territory of fifty square metres, food is cooked in four cauldrons, which, if one has to judge by their appearance, have not been scrubbed since the times of the Delhi Sultanate.

Since the laws of the *k͟hānqāh* forbade the storing of supplies for any length of time, and because provisions piled up in abundance, the Shaikh ordered that all the granaries should be emptied every week, and that the remainder of grain and lentil should be distributed among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. In the reign of ‘Ala’uddin Khalji, who had adopted a policy of economy of *waqf* expenditure and had established control over philanthropic institutions, the

Sultan's informers quite often used to visit the *khānqāh* unannounced to keep a watch on how much food was cooked and how it was distributed. When the Shaikh came to know of it, he ordered the menu of the communal meal to be made purposely more varied and helpings to be enlarged. Complaisant in other worldly matters, he was unflinching when the matter concerned his right to feed 'God's people'. 'In every religion satisfying (other's) hunger is considered to be a pious deed', the Shaikh used to assert. The Sultan, apparently, did not want to get entangled with him once again and inspections came to an end.

In comparison with Baba Farid's cloister the *khānqāh* in Ghiyathpur could boast of some comfort: here, each dervish occupied a separate *ḥujra*, and there was no shortage of household servants. Nizamuddin's habits, with all their simplicity, also differed from his *murshid*'s way of life in a certain aristocratic mode. Like the Prophet, he was fond of perfumes and aromas, and in his cell incense was kept burning all the time. And, of course, it is impossible to imagine him nibbling a wooden bun. Recollecting how unpretentious Baba Farid was, the Shaikh used to mention in passing that he had to brush his teeth with a twig – for that matter even in our times people in Indian villages brush their teeth with twigs from the *nīm* tree. Nizamuddin, most probably, had some more modern tool at his disposal for this purpose.

Jamā'at khāna was built with the usual unbaked bricks, but its roof rested upon stone columns – evidence of a certain architectural over-indulgence. The private chambers of the Shaikh himself were on the roof, enclosed with a parapet. Cells were located along the perimeter of the main building and the *riwāq*, where visitors used to eat and sleep, extended along the inner courtyard. In the centre of the courtyard a huge banyan tree grew; under its branches dervishes used to protect themselves from the heat. Opposite the entrance gates were the door-keeper's premises (*darbānī*), where people unwilling to parade their sojourn in the *khānqāh* awaited reception. In the cloister there was also their own water storage facility and a number of the store rooms.

Since Nizamuddin was not a native of Delhi, he was for a long time compelled to share accommodations with some of his disciples and devotees. Soon after his mother's death he moved to the vacant house of 'Imadulmulk, Amir Khusrow's maternal grandfather. In this three-storey private residence – *ḥawelī* was a virtual hostel of Sufis – apart from wandering dervishes, the large family of Sayyid Mahmud Kirmani, with whom Nizamuddin never parted in future,

had taken up residence. After a few years 'Imadulmulk's sons returned to the capital from their respective *iqṭā'* and drove away the lodgers. From then on the Shaikh frequently moved from place to place, and father and son Kirmani followed him with bundles of books. For a while he lived in Bansal, not far from Delhi, and in 1286 seriously thought of moving to Patiali, to Amir Khusrow. The change of lodgings continued until a devotee of the Shaikh, the courtier Shamsuddin Sharabdar (the supplier of drinks to the Sultan's court) invited him to take up residence in his estate in Ghiyathpur, at the very bank of the Jamna, where Nizamuddin settled down once and for all.

The *k͟hānqāh* in Ghiyathpur resembled not so much a commune as a South Asian *g'harānā*, a family-type school, where relatives and kinsfolk of various generations lived together, engaged in one type of creative activity – usually music and, in the present case, Sufism. Here lived permanently the families of Kirmani and the late Badruddin Ishaq, Shaikh Farid's grandchildren and the children of Nizamuddin's sister, who in the course of time became related to each other through marriage. Apart from them there were many dervishes and *murīds* in the *k͟hānqāh*, spending their prescribed period of probation there. Some of the disciples, for example, Burhanuddin Gharib or Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, had their own houses in the neighbourhood. There were no slaves and bond servants in the *k͟hānqāh*, because the Shaikh adhered to the strict principle: 'There is no such things as slavery and dominion in the Way' (Amir Hasan 1992: 83). Indeed, under the Shaikh's influence, many of his associates set their slaves free.[12]

Nizamuddin used to spend a greater part of the day participating in congregational prayers and *d͟hikr*, attending to his *murīds* and receiving visitors. Out of humility he used to go to the congregational mosque in Kilugarhi on foot, although he was an excellent horseman, and it was only in extreme old age that he took to travelling in a palanquin. In accordance with the custom laid down earlier by Baba Farid, he was accessible to the persons requiring his help all twenty-four hours of the day round the clock and in any circumstances.[13]

Having finished with his daily duties and having performed the supererogatory night-time prayers, which is an indication of piety of a particularly high order, the Shaikh used to retire to his rooms on the roof, and the only person whom he received at this late time was the poet Amir Khusrow. He brought with him the news and gossip of the court, the aroma of the external world and the *ghazals*, of which the saint was so fond. The Shaikh listened to the poet with pleasure, from time to time asking again: 'What else, oh, Turk?' It is known that Nizamuddin had given Amir Khusrow the nickname

'God's Turk', and if we recall that in the language of that time Turk was synonymous to Muslim, this signified that the Sufi, who was against *shughl* and collaboration with the authorities, had a profound respect for this man of the world and courtier, who had been in the service of seven Sultans. It is clear that the Shaikh's relations with Amir Khusrow happen to be a special case of mutual attachment of two eminent persons, to whom no rules or formalities whatever were applicable.

Nizamuddin Awliya's personality had a profound influence on Amir Khusrow's creative work – enough to say, that eulogies (*madḥ*) of the Shaikh are included in all the five poems of his *Khamsa*, and also in the *mathnawīs The Key of Victories* (*Miftāḥ al-futūḥ*), *Nine Heavenly Spheres* (*Nuh sipihr*), *Duwal Rani and Khizr Khan* (*Duwal Rānī-o-Khiḍr Khān*), and in the prose chronicles, *The Treasures of Victories* (*Khazā'in al-futūḥ*) and *A History of Delhi* (*Tārīkh-i Dehlī*). But the few lines of the epitaph written by Amir Khusrow on his preceptor and friend's death have been retained longer than everything else in the descendants' memories. For ages these have been handed down by *qawwāls* (singers) and are sung even today in Nizamuddin's *dargāh*:

Gorī sove sej par mukh par d'āle kes
Chal Khusro g'har apne rain bhaī chahū des
The fair beauty has fallen asleep on her bed, tresses hiding her face.
It is time now to go home, Khusrow, night has set in everywhere.

The sense of this brief *dohā* in Hindawi language is determined by the popular Sufi motif, which has been brilliantly studied by E. Bertels in his work *The Tress and The Face* (Bertels 1965: 109–25). Just as dark tresses fall on a light-complexioned face, day gives place to night. But tresses – Amir Khusrow has not used here the Persian words *zulf* or *gesū*, which would be conventional in such a context, but the Indian *kes* (from Sanskrit *keśa*) – are also a metaphor for the Divine Essence in its concealed aspect, and also as a symbol of plurality, hiding the Unity. So that the gloom, which has enveloped the world after the saint's death, is also the darkness of ignorance, yet another veil, separating the Sufi from the Truth.

Of course, one may perceive something mystic in the fact that Nizamuddin Awliya, his favourite Amir Khusrow and his persecutor Ghiyathuddin Tughluq passed away in the course of the same year

1325. The poet, who outlived the saint by only half a year, was buried in close proximity to him, and his tomb today on the territory of the *dargāh*, I think, excels the Shaikh's sepulchre in beauty and richness of décor. Finding himself after death in the *walāyat*, i.e. within the limits of the spiritual authority of Nizamuddin, it is as if Amir Khusrow himself also partly became a *walī*: in any case offerings are made at his *mazār*, and *qawwālī*, glorifying the friendship between the *shaikh* and the poet, are performed at the threshold of his tomb. Believers attached special importance to the territorial proximity of these two burial sites – all the misfortunes which befell Delhi in the middle and second half of the eighteenth century, and which led to the complete pillage of the capital, were explained by them by the fact that in 1748 the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah was buried between the tombs of the saint and the poet.

Although Amir Khusrow's relations with his spiritual preceptor became a favourite subject of research for Indian scholars, the memory of the saint was truly perpetuated by another disciple, Amir Hasan Sijzi (1254–1336), who has been referred to repeatedly in this book. He was a remarkable lyric poet, who was constantly compared with Sa'di, the author of several poetical *dīwāns* and *mathnawīs*. Although not possessing the fecundity of Amir Khusrow, he was his equal in the vitality of his talent.

If Amir Khusrow was connected with the Shaikh from his youth (thanks to his grandfather), then Amir Hasan, native of the same Badaun, found himself in his field of influence when he was already an elderly person. Hagiographic tradition ascribes to Amir Hasan a dissipated mode of life, which came to an end thanks to a meeting with the Shaikh. Jamali Kanbuh asserts in *Siyar al-'ārifīn* that while returning from Mehrauli after *ziyārat* to the tomb of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Nizamuddin saw Amir Hasan drinking wine in the company of revellers on the bank of the tank Hauz-i Shamsi. Amir Hasan supposedly knew the Shaikh by sight already from Badaun and, having noticed him, exclaimed with bravado:

> Your piety has not diminished my sinfulness;
> What is more powerful – your piety or my sinfulness?
> (Nizami 1992: 45)

Whatever the truth of this episode, Amir Hasan subsequently repented of his sins and became a constant visitor to Ghiyathpur. Here he started taking down the Shaikh's discourses and accounts, having explained to him the purpose of his work as follows:

> I have heard the Shaykh say many times that the novice must consult a book on the Sufi masters and their guidelines for spiritual progress. Since no collection has been made of the inspiring teachings of the master's predecessors, I have compiled those of your blessed words which I have heard and till now I have not shown them (to anyone) awaiting your command, that I might do what you want in this regard.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 113)

The Shaikh looked through Hasan's notes and approved his style. After that he kept an eye on the poet's work, repeating for him whatever he did not manage to write down, and even filling up the blanks in his manuscript.

The famous book *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* which took shape as a result contains the account of 188 meetings with the Shaikh in the course of 1308 to 1322. By completing his work Amir Hasan Sijzi created a new genre of Sufi literature – *malfūẓāt*. Perhaps this is the only genre of Indo-Persian literature, the invention of which can not be ascribed to Amir Khusrow.[14] Of course, saints' discourses were written down even earlier,[15] however they usually go side by side with biographical information (elements of *ṭabaqāt*), eulogies of the saints (elements of *manāqib*) and appraisals of contemporaries and descendants (a striking example of such a composite hagiographic genre is Amir Khurd's *Siyar al-awliyā*'). *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* almost exclusively consists of Nizamuddin Awliya's monologues, and the compiler's commentaries have been reduced to a minimum. Apart from that, Amir Hasan's book was completed during the saint's lifetime, and its text was apparently authenticated by him personally, which is why none of the later hagiographers has cast doubt on the authenticity of this work.

The material of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* embodies in flesh the dry episodic bones of historical chronicles – this is particularly striking when one reads Amir Hasan's book simultaneously with Barani's *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*. Beliefs and superstitions, the tenor of daily life and ethos of the people of that distant epoch, come to life in unassuming stories 'from life' and in anecdotes. At the same time the text of *malfūẓāt* also raises certain questions. It is natural that most of the stories and recollections of the Shaikh have to do with his *murshid* Baba Farid. However, the man most frequently alluded to next is not one of the other great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya, but Baha'uddin Zakariya Multani, founder of the competing fraternity, with whom Baba Farid's

relations were quite strained. On the other hand Khwaja Mu'inuddin Sijzi is, on the whole, mentioned in the book only in passing.

Among the quotations from books of eminent theologians the first place belongs to al-Ghazzali – the Shaikh quotes his *The Revival of the Sciences of Religion* (*Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*) thrice. At the same time in his discourses there are neither any quotations of, nor references to, Ibn al-'Arabi, who was, in a doctrinal sense, far closer to him. He quotes discourses of Abu Sa'id Abul Khair Maihani whenever there is an opportunity, but keeps absolute silence about Jalaluddin Rumi, whose *Mathnawī* was the handbook of Indian mystics. Either such were the predilections of Nizamuddin Awliya himself, or this is how Amir Hasan Sijzi selected the material of the conversations.

Being a connoisseur of poetry, the Shaikh also paid close attention to music: he not only regularly conducted *samā'* in his cloister, for which he even suffered in the memorable *maẓhar*, but he was also the first to introduce the practice of public *qawwālī*, which attracted a large audience (whereas *samā'* was meant only for the initiated). Even today Nizamuddin Awliya's *dargāh* is a centre of the art of *qawwālī*, in which the outstanding Indian performer of this genre Muhammad Hayat Khan participated. The Shaikh's attitude towards *samā'* was characterized by the same prudence and duality as that of al-Hujwiri. In particular, on the authority of a corresponding *ḥadīth*, he was against the use of the flute and other wind instruments during musical auditions, considering only percussion instruments to be permissible. According to the Shaikh, *samā'* should be considered neither absolutely prohibited nor undoubtedly permissible, and its lawfulness depends on who is the performer and who are the audience.

The Chishti tradition of compiling treatises on *samā'*, as already mentioned, began with Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori. The Shaikh continued it by asking his disciple Fakhruddin Zarradi to write a treatise on the principles of 'audition' (*Uşūl as-samā'*), where the saint's views regarding the benefit and purpose of musical auditions are quoted, particularly the *bait* (couplet):

> *Har wajd ke az samā' hāsil āyad.*
> *Zawqe ast ke az wahmī āsāyad.*
> Every ecstasy (*wajd*) that is derived from *samā'*
> Is a taste which relieves the soul of anxiety.
>
> (Lawrence 1983: 77)

Nizamuddin's intellect was not dependent on age: even in his old age he retained in his memory a great number of verses and musical

melodies, astonishing the audience with the accuracy of his quotations and correctness of taste – chronologically the last episodes of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, where he discusses the meaning of *ghazal*, date back to 1322, when he was already eighty years old. The Shaikh died on 3 April 1325, and Barani writes as if after his death the inhabitants of Delhi, having lost their main intercessor, anticipated the imminent onset of doomsday. To a certain extent they turned out to be right, because hard times began both for Delhiites and the Chishtiyya fraternity. The dramatic reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325–51) was accompanied by endless insurrections and revolts by provinces of the Delhi Sultanate, which were inclined to separatism. Under these conditions the Sultan, apprehending opposition of the Sufis in general and of the Chishtis in particular, put obstacles in the way of their missionary and philanthropic activity and resorted to unjustified repression, expropriating the property of *k͟hānqāhs* and *awqāf*. For that matter, Tuhgluq did not spare even the leading '*ulamā*, whom he, not without reason, suspected of disloyalty.

Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, whose lot it was to be at the head of the fraternity at such a difficult time, tells about the decline being endured by the Delhi *k͟hānqāh*:

> These days the number of *darwishes* has decreased. In the days of the Shaykh [Niẓām ad-dīn Awliyā] *darwishes* used to come by twenties and thirties, and the Shaykh used to keep them as guests for three days . . . When there was an '*urs*, the Shaykh [Niẓām ad-dīn] would invite all *lashkardars* [men of the army] and *darwishes* would arrive from all sides . . . Nowadays there are neither such soldiers, nor such slaves, nor such armies. All have deteriorated. Men have to wait [in vain] for the *darwishes* to come.[16]
>
> (Trimingham 1971: 23)

When still in favour, prince Khizr Khan started building a mosque next to the *k͟hānqāh*, one of the halls of which represented a *qubba*, where the Shaikh was intended to be laid to eternal rest. However, lying on his death-bed, Nizamuddin for some reason changed his mind and expressed his wish to be buried in the open. Which is where his mausoleum now stands. It has a ribbed cupola resting on pillars, surrounded by a high fretted balustrade and crowned with a heavy spire (two gilded balls, strung on a spike), which resembles the top of a Hindu pinnacle, or *śhikhara*. Initially the *mazār* was erected by the same Muhammad bin Tughluq to whom, whatever one may say

of him, many saints of the subcontinent owe their fine tombs. Nevertheless, in its modern appearance the mausoleum has no resemblance to the specimens of architecture of the Delhi Sultanate. The material (white marble) itself, the shape of the cupola (regular spherical dome with the base cut off low), enamelled overhead interior with golden inlay, as well as the composite capitals of the pillars – everything points to the fact that the mausoleum was rebuilt in the Mughal epoch.

However, adjacent to the mausoleum the mosque Jama'at-khana Masjid, which was completed by Firoz Shah, has retained its original appearance. This grand structure, made of red sandstone and consisting of the central prayer hall and two cupolated chambers, is considered to be the earliest of the South Asian mosques of the Delhi style, built in absolute conformity with the principles of Islamic ritual architecture. The absence in it of a rectangular courtyard, enclosed with lodgings, as is customary in congregational mosques (*jāmi' masjid*), indicates that Jama'at-khana Masjid was used for local purposes, exclusively for visitors of the *k͟hānqāh* (Desai 1971: 33).

On entering the *dargāh* of Nizamuddin Awliya, a pilgrim tarries for a while in the first courtyard in order to buy offerings for the saint: rose petals, sweets and incense sticks. More well-to-do visitors offer perfumes and aromatic oil (*'iṭr*), because the saint was fond of them in his lifetime, and also *chaddar*, a coloured sheet of cloth, used for covering the sepulchre. Then the pilgrim passes on to the second courtyard, where sitting at the edge of a shallow reservoir he performs ritual cleansing (*wuḍū'*), in consecutive order first washing the palms and hands, then the face and neck and finally his feet.

At the reservoir men and women's ways diverge. The former enter the tomb from the central entrance, touch the threshold with a hand or, falling on their knees, kiss it. Having entered the tomb, they walk round the sepulchre several times, throwing handfuls of rose petals on it. They give their offerings to the special attendant *mujāwir*, who sits by the *mazār* with a green box for offerings of cash. In exchange for ten to twenty rupees the *mujāwir* gives a pilgrim a packet with consecrated articles, which include a handful of rose petals, a pinch of fragrant ashes of burnt incense and some sweets.

Women also go up to the main entrance, but only in order to pray or to kiss the threshold – they can go inside only through the lateral door. Their offerings are taken from them in the vestibule, separated from the burial-vault by means of a dense lattice. Since women were always the most ardent devotees of *Maḥbūb-i ilāhī* (the Beloved Divine, as Nizamuddin Awliya was tenderly called) and also the most

generous donators of his *dargāh*, it seems particularly disappointing to me that even here they are held in a dark chamber, far from their favourite saint. But according to the couplet of Shah Nasir, a poet of Delhi of bygone days:

> *sham'a ke zer-i qadam hai manzil-i iqlīm-i 'ishq*
> *sar se jo guẓre use kaisā safar hai dūr kā*
> The destination of the clime of Love is right under the foot of the candle
> Still what a long journey for those who started from the 'head'!

Since in the annexe, crowded with women pilgrims, it was no less dark than under the foot of the candle, one could only hope that women would be the first to reach the territory of Love.

6

THE SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGN OF MULTAN

The preaching of the great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya order, as we have seen, was essentially moral and practical, and their all-absorbing passion for God was embodied in their active love for their fellow man. However, all of them, and in particular Shaikh Farid, combined spiritual work, necessary for fostering everyday piety, with the most ardent mysticism of a purely individual nature. Thanks to the Chishtis, pietism and charity, concomitant with mysticism, started being perceived as the principal virtue of a saint, and the ecstatic, 'intensive' mysticism of the chosen few developed into an 'extensive' mysticism, accessible to many. Apparently that is why by the end of the fourteenth century the social composition of South Asian *awliyā* had become diversified: 'amateurs' had started appearing as if from nowhere; blacksmiths, weavers, butchers, grocers and so on were added to the familiar figures of 'professional' mystics – the hermit or the ascetic, the wandering dervish or the *shaikh*, dwelling in a *khānqāh*. They continued to live a mundane life and be engaged in their hereditary trade, but at the same time gave evidence of spiritual perfection right up to sainthood.

Here we see the advent of the epoch of a peculiar 'new piety' (if one is permitted to apply the Christian term *devotio moderna* to the world of Islam), where the radiance of ecstasies of early Sufism gradually abated, and together with it the danger of deviation from religious laws. In the social environment of urban craftsmen, from where the new mystics and saints were recruited, it was the corporate spirit of Puritanism which prevailed, different from the aura of all-forgiveness and toleration surrounding the activities of the Chishtis. This entailed distrust for the established institutions of the transmission of *baraka* and a hostility towards intellectualism and scholarship (*'ulamā* and *shaikhs* of Sufi fraternities in equal measure became the target of spiritual poetry). There was also a general interdiction on *samā'* and

other forms of collective audition, in particular, 'loud' collective *dhikr al-ḥaḍra*.

The principal role in the formation of conservative 'new piety' and in the initiation of urban commercial and vocational groups into mysticism was played by the Suhrawardiyya fraternity, founded by the afore-mentioned Najibuddin Suhrawardi (1097–1168) and his nephew Shihabuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar Suhrawardi (1145–1234). Like Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya *silsila* also had its origin outside the limits of South Asia, in Iraq, but succeeded only in India to take shape as a fraternity with its infrastructure, internal hierarchy of members and cloisters and a single centre in Multan. The Suhrawardiyya is a strictly Sunni order, guided by Shafi'i *madhab* while the Chishtiyya belonged to the Hanafi *madhab*. For that matter, like the Chishtis, the Suhrawardis also trace their spiritual genealogy to 'Ali bin Abi Talib (through Junaid and al-Ghazali, whose disciple was Najibuddin Suhrawardi).

It has already been mentioned that the founders of the Chishtiyya order did not create any doctrinal literature, nor was their teaching systematized but was reflected in the *malfūẓāt* of early *shaikhs*. The Suhrawardis have, on the contrary, left for posterity a number of books and treatises, which became normative manuals on Sufism for subsequent generations of mystics. Chief of these is the celebrated work '*Awārif al-ma'ārif*, following which, as we have seen, *murīds* were taught even in the Chishtiyya fraternity.

The practice of one or another *ṭarīqa* to a great extent depended on the personality of its founder: let us recall that the Chishtis' refusal to collaborate with the state authority and the orientation of their social work were determined long ago by Mu'inuddin Sijzi himself. Here the Suhrawardis were no exception, and formulating the rules of the future activity of the fraternity, its eponym, Shihabuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar, took recourse to active life, renounced reclusion and excessive fasting, maintained close contacts with the authorities, and undertook diplomatic missions and political settlement of conflicts. His luxurious cloister in Baghdad, with gardens and bath houses, was specially built for him by Caliph an-Nasir, on whose behalf Abu Hafs travelled as an ambassador to the Ayyubi Sultan Malik al-Adil I of Egypt, to Khwarezm-Shah Muhammad of Bukhara and to Kaiqubad I, the Seljuk ruler of Konya.

In recognition of numerous services rendered to the state the title of *shaikh as-shuyūkh*, the official head of all the Sufis of Baghdad, was conferred on him. Apart from success in the field of diplomacy Abu Hafs 'Umar managed, again on the Caliph's instructions, to put into

shape the movement of aristocratic *futuwwa*. It is also thought that this movement was specially instituted for the extensive dissemination of the teaching of the Suhrawardiyya order. The connection with *futuwwa* was reflected even in the girdling (*shadd*) ceremony, forming a part of the initiation ritual of this fraternity.

Abu Hafs 'Umar became famous as a preceptor and teacher, whose personality exerted a profound influence on many outstanding contemporaries – among his admirers was even the great Persian poet Sa'di Shirazi, who celebrated Abu Hafs in his poem '*Būstān*'. The founder of the fraternity adhered to moderate orthodoxy and used to bestow *khirqa* even upon those whom it is impossible to call dervishes, for example, al-Qastalani, founder of the school of traditionalists. Influence of the eponym of Suhrawardiyya order upon posterity was not limited to the members of the fraternity founded by him – even Chishti *malfūẓāt*, in particular *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, are replete with stories about his spiritual feats and virtues.

The Suhrawardis came to South Asia somewhat later than the Chishtis, in the first half of the thirteenth century, although, as if to make up for it, they came not one at a time, but as a large group. Three of the five *khalīfas* of Abu Hafs: Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi (died in 1235), Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori (died in 1244, and who should not be mixed up with his Chishti namesake Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori), and Baha'uddin Zakariya Multani (1182–1262)[1] finally settled down in the subcontinent. All of them made an excellent career: Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi held the post of *shaikh ul-Islām* of Delhi for twenty years and was called *Mīr-i Dihlī* (Lord of Delhi); Hamiduddin Nagori was the chief metropolitan *qāḍī* (although he won real fame thanks to his Sufi treatises and successful campaign against '*ulamā* in support of *samā*'), and Baha'uddin Zakariya also acted at first as the *shaikh ul-Islām* and subsequently, having founded the central cloister of the fraternity in Punjab, became the real spiritual sovereign of Multan, nicknamed *Mīr-i Multān*.

The rivalry between Chishtis and Suhrawardis should not be conceived as enmity or antagonism: many members of the competing fraternities were on very friendly terms with each other, for example, Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori with Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki or Nizamuddin Awliya with Shaikh Ruknuddin. The instances of mutual hostility between leaders of the two fraternities are most probably an exception rather than the rule. In any case this hostility was expressed not in hostile conduct, but in frank discussions, of the type held on the question of poverty by Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori and Baha'uddin Zakariya on the occasion of the *maẓhar* in Delhi.[2]

Although Shaikh Abu Hafs taught that a mystic should belong only to a single fraternity, eventually many Sufis started taking initiation into both the orders, for example, Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht or Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, because of which they were respectfully called *jāmi‘ as-salāsil* (Unifiers of orders). Finally, towards the end of the thirteenth century, the territory of the subcontinent became divided into *walāyats*: the Chishtis retained the central regions around Delhi, Awadh, Rajasthan and the Deccan, and the Suhrawardis held their positions firmly in Punjab, Sind, Bengal and Gujarat.

As to how the division into *walāyats* looked like in practice can be judged by one of the episodes of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*. A certain musician, Abdullah by name, having made up his mind to go from Ajodhan to Multan, requested Shaikh Farid to pray that his journey would end happily. The saint's reply was that the limits of his spiritual jurisdiction extended only up to the banks of the Ravi, and further on began the spiritual domains of Baha'uddin Zakariya, whose help he should have sought if he wanted to ensure safety for himself throughout the entire journey. Hagiographic literature passes over in silence the conflicts, if any, between the *shaikhs* of the two fraternities because of any violations of the frontiers of their *walāyats*.

From a theoretical point of view there were no particular differences between Chishtis and Suhrawardis: both of them made use of the same doctrinal texts and manuals, for example '*Awārif al-ma‘ārif*, *Ādāb al-murīdīn*, *ar-Risāla al-Qushairiyya*, *Kashf al-maḥjūb* etc. The same Suhrawardis acquainted South Asia with the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

> The *Wahdat al-Wujud* of Ibn al-‘Arabi was introduced to India through the Suhrawardi, ‘Iraqi, however, by this time had not yet penetrated deeply into Chishti or Suhrawardi ideology. Until the mid-fourteenth century mystic ideas had been cast in the mould of the ‘*Awarifu'l-Ma‘arif* and other earlier sufi classics. The mystic spiritual experience of life with God rested entirely on love, which was opposed to both the philosopher's reason and the jurist's wrangling. Khwaja Mu‘inu'd-Din advocated that within the realm of love there must be both trinity and unity, that is, 'Lover, Love and Beloved are all one', and Shaikh Hamidu'd-Din wrote ‘*Ishqiyya* in this vein. These, however, were expressions of ecstasy rather than an advocacy of the *Wahdat al-Wujud*. Their source was the *Tamhidat* of ‘Ainu'l-Quzat Hamadani. (Rizvi 1986: 217)

Fundamental and significant differences between the two fraternities are to be found in the field of practice. Since I have already written enough about what the Chishtis preached and how they conducted themselves, it would be much easier to describe the practice of the Suhrawardiyya order by way of contrast.

Thus, the relationship between *murshid* and *murīd* was considered by the Chishtis to be sacred. While preparing for *dhikr* a Chishti novice visualized the image of his preceptor, so that he could guide his meditation and contemplation (*mushāhada*). Before their *shaikh* the Chishtis used to perform *sajda*, an act of veneration already discussed in this book, during which the disciple, having prostrated himself at the preceptor's feet, touched ('rubbed') the ground with his forehead or kissed it.[3] Suhrawardis were against the performance of *sajda* before a *shaikh*, considering the posture of prostration appropriate only during prayers. Here they cited the *sūra* 'Prostration' (*as-Sajda*), where it has been told: 'Only those believe in our signs who, when they are reminded through them, fall down prostrate and glorify by praising their Fosterer and they do not consider themselves great' (32: 15). Baha'uddin Zakariya expected an ordinary greeting *as-salām 'alaikum* from his disciples and was in this matter considerably closer to the requirements of normative Islam.

Veneration of their *shaikh* among the Chishtis reached such an intensity that they could interrupt ritual ablution or even prayer (not the obligatory canonical *ṣalāt*, but the voluntary prayer *nafīl*) in order to greet their *murshid*. More conservative Suhrawardis censured excessive courtesy to one's *pīr* to the detriment of prayers. Once Baha'uddin Zakariya was extremely displeased by the misplaced zeal of his *murīds*, who had on seeing him interrupted their *wuḍū'*, and complained to him about the only disciple who had completed his ablution: 'Among all of you only this is a true dervish, he who first completed his ablutions and then came to pay his respects to me' (Amir Hasan 1992: 339). Generally speaking, Baha'uddin Zakariya attached secondary importance to *dhikr* and voluntary prayers (particularly to the nocturnal prayer *tahajjud*, which is so important for Chishtis), considering that canonical *ṣalāt* was the basis of piety. According to him, the person who misses even one mandatory *rak'a* imperils his life.

Initiation into Sufi fraternities represented a complicated ceremony '*ahd* (agreement), among the rituals of which the central one was *bai'a*, i.e. taking oath of loyalty to the *shaikh*. During the ceremony the neophyte was given admonitions, among which one could also hear the famous precept to be obedient to the *shaikh*, like a corpse

in the hands of a mortician. The Chishtis used to shave the neophyte's head after which he made a vow of submission (*'ahd al-yad*), and the *shaikh* held his hand (*muṣāfaḥa*). Then a high felt cap (*tāj* or *kulāh*) was placed on the disciple's head, and he was robed in a special patched-up garment (*muraqqa'a* or *khirqa*). Among the Suhrawardis the investing in *khirqa* was followed by the ceremony of winding a turban around his head or girdling a sash around his waist, ensuring a definite number of knots or folds in the process. The cap of the Chishti had four corners and that of the Suhrawardi had five or twelve. However, Baha'uddin Zakariya himself throughout his life wore a turban (*dastār*), although disapproved of it for others.

Chishtis used to live in modest adobe *jamā'at khānas*, access to which was open to all and at any time. Suhrawardis resided in well-built *khānqāhs*,[4] which were erected for them by the rulers. Admittance into them was scrupulously restricted both in respect of the time of visit and the social status of the visitors. Shaikh Baha'uddin Zakariya, in particular, could not stand even the sight of *qalandars* and *juwāliqs*[5] (this is how wandering dervishes are called in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*) and never let them set foot on his threshold. Once the *juwāliqs*, before whom Baha'uddin Zakariya had the doors closed, indulged almost in a riot, insisting on alms, and pelted the *khānqāh* with stones. After some time the saint came out to meet the brawlers and declared that he held his office not for the sake of profit, but by the will of Abu Hafs 'Umar Suhrawardi, who had sent him to Multan. Having heard the name of the founder of the fraternity, *juwāliqs* prostrated themselves before the Shaikh and went back from where they had come.[6]

In Chishti *jamā'at khānas* there were *langars*, where food was offered to all those who wished. In the case where a Chishti *shaikh* could not out of poverty offer food to the visitors, he was obliged to offer at least a glass of water, with due apologies. In Suhrawardi *khānqāhs*, as in a modern European family, only those who had been invited beforehand to partake of a meal were fed. In the majority of cases such invited persons turned out to be the chosen ones (*khawāṣṣ*): well-known mystics *musāfirān*, friendly '*ulamā*, merchant-donators, famous men of letters – in short, spruced-up members of the public. Baha'uddin Zakariya was extraordinarily fastidious about food, did not partake of meals anywhere outside the limits of his cloister, even in palaces, and being no stranger to epicureanism, liked to share a meal in the company of similar connoisseurs.

Since the rules of the Chishtiyya fraternity forbade its members to possess money, all the *futūḥ* received by them were spent on charity.

Having savings was not prohibited to Suhrawardis, and they gave to the poor a fixed amount of alms, consisting of 20 per cent of each *futūḥ*. Most of the pilgrims came to Chishti cloisters for *ta'wīdhs* and medical aid. The Suhrawardis in general did not render such a service: people used to visit their *khānqāhs* mostly for esoteric rather than practical purposes. In particular, the Suhrawardis used to interpret dreams and insisted upon a daily detailed account of their dreams from the *murīds*, which, according to them, were an indication of a mystic's progress along the Path.

The Chishtis, as we will recall, spent a large part of their life observing fasts, devising such refined forms of mortification of the flesh as *chilla-i ma'kūs* and *ṣaum-i Dā'ūdī*. In hagiographic literature a Chishti mystic is usually depicted as an emaciated person, clad in rags and tatters. The Suhrawardis considered that the fast in the month of *Ramaḍān*, enjoined by *Sharī'at*, was quite enough, and they categorically rejected various ascetic experiments, seeing in them the influence of *kāfirs* (pagans). Jalaluddin Tabrizi advised Sufis to eat three times a day in order to accumulate strength for prayers and for avoidance of sin. External tidiness, *khirqa* made of fine wool and well-groomed hands, decorated with finger-rings, were the hallmark of Baha'uddin Zakariya, his disciples and descendants.

The practice of Chishtis is inconceivable without *samā'*, which Suhrawardis forbade on the basis of their eponym's declaration that all auditions (*samā'*, *ḥaḍra*) ran counter to religious law.[7] In the central *khānqāh* of the fraternity in Multan this interdiction was consistently put into practice, although in our day *qawwālī* is performed even here. However, the Suhrawardis could not eradicate *samā'* in their ranks. It has already been mentioned that one of the most ardent apologists of musical auditions was Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori, who had to take recourse to all sorts of tricks in order to conduct *samā'* in private houses. The same Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori advised Iltutmish to arrange *samā'* for the dervishes during a long drought in Delhi. The Sultan agreed, and after the *samā'* the rains fell heavily (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 85).

Beginning with Nizamuddin Awliya the Chishtis started observing celibacy, although at the same time they did not forbid members of the order to marry. It seems that Nizamuddin did not suffer from celibacy, but then Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli constantly had to drink lemon juice and chew some herbs in order to suppress the calls of the flesh. In the instances when Chishtis married they did not attach much importance to family life, regarding it as an ordinary (and burdensome) fulfilment of duty. This way of thinking is exemplified

in the families of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Shaikh Farid. Suhrawardi mystics, on the contrary, were excellent family men: thus it is known that Baha'uddin Zakariya spent enormous resources on the education of his sons, doted upon his elder grandson Ruknuddin, and thought highly of his daughter-in-law Bibi Pakdaman. Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi hired teachers not only for his sons, but also for his daughters, which is something unprecedented in Indian medieval society.

Even illicit sexual relations occurred among the Suhrawardis: Jalaluddin Tabrizi lived with a Turkish slave boy whom he had bought for 1500 *dīnārs* and was accused (although falsely) of unseemly relations with a female slave. Once even Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori fell a prey to amorous passion (judging from *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* he was beaten black-and-blue by his rival, although the gender of the object of passion was not clarified).[8]

Differences in the rules of transmission of *baraka* are also bound up with different attitudes towards family life. Amongst Chishtis right up to the fifteenth century *k͟halīfas* were appointed by the *shaik͟h* himself (very seldom were they chosen by the fraternity). Amongst them, as we have seen, there were practically no direct relatives. Mu'inuddin Sijzi had sons, but he chose Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki as his spiritual successor. The latter, in his turn, preferred Shaikh Farid to his own offspring, and Shaikh Farid gave preference to Nizamuddin Awliya. On the contrary, Shihabuddin Abu Hafs was succeeded by his own son 'Imaduddin Muhammad, who placed himself at the head of his *ribāṭ* (cloister) in Baghdad. Thus, from the very beginning, the post of *sajjādanishīn* amongst Suhrawardis became hereditary, and *baraka* was transmitted from father to son. Baha'uddin Zakariya, having seven sons and wanting to ensure a secure future for them, bequeathed the post of head of the fraternity to the eldest, and appointed others as *k͟halīfas* in various cities of Punjab and Sind. Generally speaking, the Multani *silsila* of Suhrawardis and its related chain of succession Surkh-Bukhari of Ucch (with Miran Shahi, Makhdumi and Jalali orders as its branches) were always in the hands of two families – the family of Baha'uddin Zakariya himself and that of his disciple, Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari.

As already has been mentioned more than once, the Chishtis soon gave up their proselytizing activity, considering that neither sword nor sermon, but only personal example of virtue was capable of converting followers of other religions to Islam. A tolerant and friendly attitude towards the non-Muslim population became a major policy orientation of this fraternity. The way to Suhrawardiyya *k͟hānqāh*

in Multan was barred to non-Muslims and philanthropy of the order did not extend to them. At the same time there is convincing hagiographic evidence about the missionary activity of Jalaluddin Tabrizi, that he converted Bengalis into Islam by force; in particular, with the assistance of the soldiers of Iltutmish he pulled down a Hindu temple in Devatalla (later named Tabrizabad in honour of the saint) and erected a *khānqāh* at its place.

Much has been already said about the attitude of Chishtis towards poverty – *faqr* was one of the fundamental principles of their teaching. Suhrawardis were guided by the dictums of their eponym, who considered that neither *faqr* nor *zuhd* were an indispensable condition of the life of a *dervish*, although they brought him closer to *fanā*. What is more, Abu Hafs ‘Umar taught that rigid hostility to wealth is an indication of spiritual debility, fear of dependence on money and material wealth, whereas a true Sufi is not afraid of anything and does not differentiate between wealth and poverty. Baha’uddin Zakariya cited the same arguments in his debate with Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori.

Nevertheless, ‘indifference’ to wealth made Baha’uddin Zakariya one of the most well-to-do people of his time: he bequeathed to the eldest of his sons, Sadruddin, property alone worth 700 *tankā*, a huge amount for those times. Wealth, it is true, did not bring any benefit to the saint’s descendants. After his death another of his sons was kidnapped by robbers and was rescued on payment of a huge ransom.[9] This exceptional case of medieval kidnapping indirectly proved the superiority of the Chishti concept of handling money, according to which one should get rid of it immediately and should never amass it. It is doubtful whether it would have occurred even to a most inveterate scoundrel to kidnap one of the numerous children of indigent Shaikh Farid.

However, Baha’uddin Zakariya’s fortune (and, for that matter, even his generosity) is most strikingly characterized by the episode in *Fawā’id al-fu’ād* in which the governor of Multan appealed to him for assistance in the form of food supply, since no stocks of grain were left in the city. The Shaikh gave instructions to issue grains from his granaries, and in the middle of the grain a carafe full of silver coins was found. The honest-minded governor declared: ‘The Shaykh has provided us with grain, not this silver. It must be returned to him’. ‘Tell them,’ said the saint to whom the find was brought, ‘that Zakariya knew about this. I intentionally gave you this silver along with the grain. If you give something to somebody, you should give it with a flourish’ (Amir Hasan 1992: 330–1).

It can be said that possession of property, which was rejected by the Chishtis, was programmatic for the Suhrawardis. Shaikh Ruknuddin (Baha'uddin Zakaria's grandson), who had been the head of the fraternity for a long time, considered that spiritual preceptors should possess three treasures:

> Firstly, they should have wealth (*māl*), in order to satisfy the believers' requirements. If a *dervish* lacks money, how can he gratify a *qalandar*, when he asks for *sherbet*? These people will insult him, for which they will be punished on the day of the Last Judgement. Secondly, preceptors should possess knowledge (*'ilm*) in order to carry on learned discourses with the '*ulāmā*. Thirdly, they should be endowed with mystic state (*ḥāl*) in order to produce an impression on *dervishes*.
> (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 74–5)

Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli, who narrated this Suhrawardi 'programme' to Hamid Qalandar, adds on his own, that for Chishtis wealth is of no use, whereas '*ilm* and *ḥāl* are indeed indispensable.

The Chishtis were averse to government service (*shughl*) and regarded only the income from unasked offerings (*futūḥ*) and from the cultivation of waste plots of land (*iḥyā*) as 'just'. They did not have an aversion even to beggary (let us recollect the *zanbīl*, with which Shaikh Farid's disciples used to go about the neighbourhood). They considered peasant's work and small-scale trade as the best occupation for laymen, provided prices fixed were 'fair' and the merchant was content with minimum profit. They supported 'Ala'uddin Khalji's strict economic policy that had introduced fixed prices and had suppressed the black market, and considered that even tax collectors should show clemency to taxpayers. Suhrawardis who had repudiated beggary lived on *awqāf*, i.e. generous grants of land on the part of the government and rich donations of commercial and vocational corporations. The social and ethical value of productive labour and encouragement of personal enrichment were important aspects of their preaching, which attracted the 'bazaar elite' to the ranks of the fraternity.

Finally, the Chishtis used to proclaim non-collaboration with the powers that were often in opposition to the state, did not pay visits to Sultans and did not invite them to their cloisters. Of course, being absolutely faithful to this principle was not possible, and from time to time the Chishtis had to interfere in the political situation, as was done by Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli in order to enthrone Firoz Shah

Tughluq. On the contrary, the Suhrawardis regarded guidance of the 'pillars of state' as a part of their mission. The *shaikhs* of this fraternity regularly visited the palaces of earthly sovereigns, gave them advice and fulfilled missions on their behalf, which, as we have seen, was the custom since the times of Abu Hafs 'Umar. As J. S. Trimingham states: 'Contrary to the Chishti shaikhs . . . Baha' ad-din pursued a worldly policy, associating freely with princes, accepting honours and wealth, and building up a large fortune. He and his associates also followed a rigid orthodox line, pandering to the '*ulamā* and rejecting *samā*'' (Trimingham 1971: 65–6).

Baha'uddin Zakariya was on friendly terms with Iltutmish (his grandson continued this tradition, having become an adviser to Khalji and Tughluq Sultans) and intrigued successfully in his favour against the ruler of Punjab Nasiruddin Qubacha.[10] Sometimes an intervention of Suhrawardis in politics turned out to be a boon for the people: when during yet another invasion of Punjab by Mongols in 1247 the fortress of Multan was captured, Baha'uddin Zakariya successfully carried out peace negotiations with the Mongol military leader Suli Nuyin, as a result of which the conquerors were content with laying tribute and left Multan.

It is tempting to conceive the differences between the traditions of the Chishtiyya and Suhrawardiyya orders as the opposition of democratism and elitism, tolerance and rigorism, which is exactly what some authors have occasionally done. However, such an oversimplifying contraposition is far-fetched and unfair. Comprehending the exalted mysticism of the Chishtis and the spiritual intensity of their practice and adhering to the extraordinarily stringent requirements which they placed upon the novices and initiates would have been far more difficult than perfecting oneself methodically and gradually in the *ṭarīqa* of the Suhrawardiyya. It is another matter that Chishtis did not insist on anything from the laymen and followers of other religions, except observance of fundamental ethical norms, but it does not mean that they were similarly indulgent even to the fraternity.

The Suhrawardis appear to have espoused conservatism and selectivity, since they had nothing to do with followers of other religions and did not countenance syncretism, but they initiated Muslims into their fraternity without any particular restrictions, irrespective of whether a neophyte had a calling for mysticism and possessed the capability to make progress on the Path. In the final analysis such a pragmatic approach was beneficial both to the fraternity, the number of whose members increased swiftly, and to the society, where an atmosphere of 'new piety' gained prevalence.

In any case the leading position of Chishtis and Suhrawardis in South Asia was determined not so much by attractiveness of doctrine or practice, as by the fact that from the very beginning their fraternities were headed by brilliant, charismatic leaders. Other major 'maternal' fraternities having their branches in the subcontinent (Kubrawiyya, Qadiriyya, Shattariyya) were not so lucky with their leaders, and their influence was considerably more modest. Such a placement of forces in the camp of South Asian Sufism survived till the second half of the sixteenth century, when the so-called 'Naqshbandiyya reaction' came to the fore.

However great may be the merits of other disciples of Abu Hafs, credit for the formation and growth of the Suhrawardiyya fraternity in South Asia goes in the first place to Baha'uddin Zakariya and his successors, and several generations of saints from Multan and Ucch. In spite of the fact that some have ascribed four quite questionable merits (dust, heat, beggars and graveyards) to Multan, it was and continues to be a big, flourishing city, a centre of cotton-growing and weaving, the Islamic history of which can be traced back to Muhammad bin Qasim in AD 711. This young Arab military leader was successful in subjugating Multan not long before his tragic death[11] and in annexing it to the domains of Omayyad Caliph.

In the year 1005 after several centuries of rule by the Hindu Rajas, Multan became a part of the Ghaznavid empire and subsequently passed into the hands of the Governors of Ghorids, of whom the most well known was the already mentioned Nasiruddin Qubacha. After Mu'izzuddin Ghori's death he proclaimed himself to be an independent ruler and was in control of a vast territory extending from Multan to Thatta. It was during his rule that the Suhrawardis took root in Punjab.

The founder of the Indian branch of the fraternity Baha'uddin Zakariya was a native Punjabi going back several generations – his ancestors had come to Multan with Muhammad bin Qasim's expedition. He was born in the mountain village of Kot Karor and, like many other *awliyā*, lost his father early. However, in contrast to the great *shaikhs* of the Chishtiyya order, whose childhood was spent in poverty, Baha'uddin Zakariya belonged to a well-to-do family, which made it possible for him in his youth to travel a lot in Khurasan, perform *Ḥajj* to Mecca and to visit Jerusalem. He got his religious education beyond the borders of the subcontinent – at first in Bukhara and subsequently in Baghdad, where Abu Hafs 'Umar initiated him into the Suhrawardiyya fraternity and admitted him amongst his *murīds*. Baha'uddin Zakariya was always the best pupil:

the teachers in Bukhara nicknamed him *Farishta* (angel) for his gentle nature and obedience. Probably these qualities stood him in good stead in Abu Hafs' *ribāṭ*, where, according to *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, he stayed only for seventeen days, after which he got *khilāfat-nāma* from the *shaikh*. Other disciples, who had been waiting for this event for years, grumbled:

> 'We have spent so many years in the saint's presence and yet we had no such favors conferred on us.' Their murmurings reached the ears of Shaykh Shihab ad-din. He made this reply to them: 'You brought wet wood. How can wet wood catch fire? But Zakariya brought dry wood. With one puff he went up in flames!'
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 129–30)

From Baghdad Baha'uddin Zakariya returned to Multan, which was assigned to him as *walāyat* by his preceptor. Jalaluddin Tabrizi, who was nominated to work in Bengal, accompanied him. The '*ulamā* and Sufis of Multan did not show any particular enthusiasm on the occasion of the new competitor's arrival and made it clear by sending him a jug, full to the brim with milk, as a complimentary gift. In the allegorical language of Islamic etiquette it signified that the city was overcrowded with mystics and scholars, and there was no room in it for Baha'uddin. The Shaikh's reciprocal gesture was no less expressive: he sent the jug back after putting a rose in it. It implied that the young Sufi was laying claim to a position as exceptional as the place of a rose in milk. Besides, as is generally known, milk will not run over the edge of the vessel because of the rose floating on its surface.

However, this was not the end of Baha'uddin Zakariya's conflicts with his colleagues. Initially he used to go for prayers to the *madrasa* of the chief Qadi of Multan, Qutbuddin Kashani, who was sceptically disposed towards Sufism. Once Baha'uddin finished prayer earlier than the prescribed time, and when asked about the reason, he replied: 'If someone learns through intuition (*nūr-i bāṭin*) that the prayer leader has made an error, it is appropriate for him to arise before the end of the prayer.' Qutbuddin Kashani, who was the *Imām*, i.e. the leader during this particular prayer, was indignant at the self-conceit of the young Sufi, and exclaimed: 'Every intuition which is not in accord with the dictates of the Law, that is a heinous sin!' (Amir Hasan 1992: 343–4).

After the incident Qadi Qutbuddin forbade Baha'uddin Zakariya from showing himself in his *madrasa* in future. For that matter, there

was no need of it, since soon after a *khānqāh*, with a mosque attached to it, was erected for the Shaikh on Iltutmish's order. It is difficult to imagine Baba Farid or Nizamuddin Awliya in such a situation, indicative of a lack of humility, which warned most of all against manifestation of arrogance towards the brethren or religious authorities. A feeling of their own superiority, even arrogance, in everything concerning faith was in general peculiar to Suhrawardis.

Thus, Jalaluddin Tabrizi once visited the governor of Badaun, Qadi Kamaluddin Ja'fri, and having come to know that he was performing *namāz*, expressed doubt as to his ability to pray. The offended governor, to whom the saint's arrogant remark had been conveyed, came to him insisting on an explanation. Jalaluddin Tabrizi's reply was:

> Alas, the prayer of scholars (*'ulama*) is one thing, and the prayer of God's beggars (*fuqara*) is another thing . . . In their prayer the scholars face the Ka'ba and then pray. If they cannot see the Ka'ba, they pray in the direction of the Ka'ba, and if they are in a place where even the direction of the Ka'ba is not known, they select the most likely direction that would orient them to the Ka'ba. The prayer orientation (*qibla*) of the scholars is not other than these three possibilities, whereas the beggars of God never offer prayer unless they see the Throne of God.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 345)

Although Baha'uddin Zakariya was a model of pious respectability and Jalaluddin Tabrizi became famous for a certain amount of eccentricity (suffice it to say that on the way from Baghdad to Lahore the former was constantly praying and meditating, while the latter was seeing sights and visiting acquaintances), cordial relations between them continued for a long time. The most dramatic test of their friendship was the *maẓhar*, which was presided over by Baha'uddin Zakariya, and in which Jalaluddin Tabrizi figured as the accused, charged with an illicit sexual relationship with a bondmaid. Hagiographic sources unanimously consider the accusation to have been trumped up on instructions from the well-known persecutor of Sufis, Najmuddin Sughra. This *shaikh ul-Islām*, who left behind him a bad legacy in Sufi literature, bribed the slave dancing-girl (i.e. a doubly lowly person) to commit perjury, and she slandered the saint before the Sultan. Since this was not the first scandal in which Jalaluddin Tabrizi turned out to be implicated,[12] the Sultan saw to it

that a *maẓhar* was convened, at which all the religious authorities of Delhi, including Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori, were present.

That the lawsuit against the saint was an extraordinary phenomenon is indirectly testified by the fact that history has retained even the name of the plaintiff and the perjurer – Gawhar. No one knows what turn the case might have taken but for Baha'uddin Zakariya, who quite ingeniously saved his fellow-mate of the Baghdad *ribāṭ* from disgrace. As soon as the accused entered the hall, the chairman rushed towards him in order to pick up the shoes taken off by him. Sultan Iltutmish reasonably observed that such a demonstration of respect for the defendant made the *maẓhar* meaningless. Baha'uddin Zakariya replied to this that Jalaluddin had served their common spiritual preceptor for seven long years,[13] and he himself for only seventeen days, and that is why it became him, Baha'uddin, to use the dust from under the feet of his senior colleague as *surma* (collyrium) for eyes. This incident transformed the atmosphere of the trial from the very beginning, and even Gawhar, called for interrogation, was so shaken by the constellation of '*ulamā* and *awliyā* who had gathered together, that she confessed to slander.

The result of the miscarried intrigue against Jalaluddin was Najmuddin Sughra's dismissal from the post of *shaikh ul-Islām* and it was Baha'uddin Zakariya who replaced him. As mentioned earlier *shaikh ul-Islām* was not a permanent position like *ṣadr as-ṣudūr*. The Sultans of Delhi conferred this title on religious dignitaries as an honour and recipients obtained both stipends and land. They were not obliged to be in constant attendance at court and offered only occasional advice to the rulers. Some *shaikh ul-Islām*, like Najmuddin Sughra or Nuruddin Muhammad Ghaznawi, took a very active part in politics and administration. To Shaikh Baha'uddin it only meant additional finance to his *khānqāh*. He was not known to have been closely involved in political matters except for recommending his favourites to the Sultan.

After the scandalous *maẓhar* apologies were tendered to Jalaluddin Tabrizi, however he did not wish to remain in the capital where he had been subjected to such a humiliation. Of what had happened to him he spoke expressively: 'When I came into this city I was pure gold. Now I have turned to silver. What will I become next (if I remain here)?' (Amir Hasan 1992: 212). Not desirous of becoming cheap copper, Jalaluddin set off to convert the Bengali pagans, and Iltutmish, apparently to compensate for the moral damage, equipped him for the journey with a detachment of the Sultan's army.

Notwithstanding the temporal qualities of a diplomat and politician, Baha'uddin Zakariya was undoubtedly endowed with the vocation of a mystic and the talent of a spiritual preceptor, which was admitted even by his opponents. *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* ascribes to him the ability to recite the entire Qur'an in one cycle of prayer: 'Shaykh Baha ad-din Zakariya then stepped forward. In one cycle of prayer he recited the entire Qur'an plus four additional sections; then in the second cycle he recited the *Surat al-Ikhlas* (Q. 112) and finished his prayer' (Amir Hasan 1992: 86).

In addition, the Shaikh had the rare gift, called *nafs-i-gīrā*, which is the ability to fully control the spiritual state and consciousness of his *murīds* and to bend them to his will. Following the precepts of the founder of the Suhrawardiyya order, Baha'uddin Zakariya considered that a *sālik*, travelling on the mystic Path, should not change his leader in the course of the entire spiritual journey: 'You should not tarry at every door and entrance', he used to say, 'Hold onto one door and hold onto it firmly' (Amir Hasan 1992: 112).

Apparently, that is why many of his *murīds* lived in the cloister in Multan for decades, as, for example, the poet Fakhruddin Ibrahim 'Iraqi,[14] who spent twenty-five long years in the saint's magnetic field. One could come across similar 'old-timers' even in Chishti *jamā'at-khānas* (let us recall, for example, Badruddin Ishaq and the Kirmani family), but on the whole the period of novicehood and the process of granting of *khilāfat-nāma* amongst them was considerably shorter. The South Asian Suhrawardis in general somehow very reluctantly parted with their *baraka*: Baha'uddin Zakariya and Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari nominated *khalīfas* in the main from amongst their own sons, and Jalaluddin Tabrizi and Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori restricted the number of disciples considerably.

It has already been mentioned that Baha'uddin Zakariya did not countenance musical auditions. At the same time most of all he liked to listen to how Fakhruddin 'Iraqi recited his *ghazals*. As it was even for the Chishtis, poetry was for him the most adequate means of expression of mystic experience. It is mentioned in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* that he would stand in the doorway of his room, continually repeating the *bait*:

> O beauty, cast a glance once more on me,
> For I've strayed not – may God my witness be!

'What could he have been thinking?' Nizamuddin Awliya comments upon this episode, 'Nobody knows what the verse connoted for

him, or what he derived from its constant repetition' Amir Hasan 1992: 198).

In any case Baha'uddin did not succeed in banishing *samā'* from the *khānqāh* in Multan for all time: nowadays *qawwāls* perform the *bait* from a famous *ghazal* of Fakhruddin 'Iraqi at the gates of his tomb.

> *Nukhustīn bāde k-andar jām kardand*
> *Zi chashm-i mast-i sāqī wām kardand*
> The eternal wine poured out in the goblet,
> Was borrowed from the *sāqī*'s intoxicated eyes.
> (Safa 1984: 580)

Tradition has it that other disciples of the Shaikh were shocked to learn that this *ghazal* was being sung in local taverns to the accompaniment of the harp. They complained to the Shaikh who asked 'Iraqi to recite the complete *ghazal*. On listening to the end of the verse, Baha'uddin Zakariya was so deeply moved by it that he declared 'Iraqi's training completed. He ordered him to give up discipline, presented him his own *khirqa* and later appointed him his *khalīfa*. 'Iraqi's devotion to his *pīr* expressed itself in many of the verses which he wrote. One of them stated:

> If you ask of the world who is the guide of mortals,
> You will hear from the heavens nothing but 'Zakariya'.
> (Amir Khurd 1978: 109)

Amongst Baha'uddin Zakariya's and Qadi Hamiduddin Nagori's disciples there were quite a number of merchants and craftsmen by birth, who continued to lead a temporal life and visited the *khānqāh* only from time to time. Particularly glorified in hagiographic literature were the weaver Ahmad Naharwani, the butcher Shaikh 'Ainuddin, Shahi Muy Tab (Hair-Rope Maker who was Nizamuddin Awliya's boyhood friend from Badaun), Mahmud Muyina-Duz (Tailor of Fur) and the artisan Hasan Afghan. *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* refers to their virtues and saintliness over and over.

Hasan Afghan, in particular, was endowed with such extra-sensory faculties that, in spite of being illiterate, he could among other written texts make out the lines of Qur'ran because, thanks to his internal sight (*baṣīrat*) he could see the radiance emanating from them. Baha'uddin Zakariya used to say about him: 'If tomorrow they ask me to bring forward one person from my household (*dargah*) as a representative to face judgment on behalf of all the others, I would select Hasan Afghan' (Amir Hasan 1992: 90).

Undoubtedly the most striking figure amongst Baha'uddin Zakariya's associates was his *khalīfa*, Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari (1198–1292), from whom begins the Ucch branch of the fraternity, called Surkh-Bukhari. Tradition ascribes to this mystic, who, judging by the nickname *Surkhposh*, used to dress himself in red clothes, the conversion of Chinghiz Khan himself to Islam. The legend says that on the way from Bukhara to India Jalaluddin was taken prisoner by the Mongols, who threw him into a fire. However, the saint came out of the flame unharmed, and this miracle made such an impression upon Chinghiz Khan that he adopted the true faith and gave his daughter in marriage to Jalaluddin.

Although Baha'uddin Zakariya could rightfully be proud of all his disciples, he often used to say that he would have exchanged all of them for Jamaluddin Hansawi, perhaps because he was a talented poet. To this Shaikh Farid used to reply, using with good effect the name of his *murīd* (derived from *jamāl*, i.e. beauty), that such an exchange is possible only when one is referring to property (*māl*), but not to beauty (*jamāl*).

Over a period of fifty years Baha'uddin Zakariya was the chief saint and patron of Multan. The constant raids of Mongols, in connection with which the local rulers and military leaders often had recourse to his spiritual intercession, furthered the consolidation of his fame. Baha'uddin Zakariya died in extraordinarily mysterious circumstances, narrated by Amir Hasan without any comment:

> One day a disciple brought a letter, and gave it to Shaykh Sadr ad-din (his son and successor), saying: 'A man gave me this letter and said, "Take it to Shaykh Baha ad-din Zakariya".' Shaykh Sadr ad-din, when he read the address on the letter, turned pale. He went and gave that letter to Shaykh Baha ad-din Zakariya. The Shaykh, on reading the letter, turned aside and uttered loud cries. That night Shaykh Baha ad-din Zakariya – may God have mercy upon him – died.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 328)

Nowhere in hagiographic literature, including even Amir Khurd's exhaustively detailed work, could I find any hint as to the sender of the fatal letter or its contents. It runs strangely counter to the artistic laws of hagiographic genre, where each and every story, anecdote and parable is meticulously explained in order to edify the reader.

The *khānqāh* in Multan reached its maximum prosperity under Ruknuddin Abul Fath (died in 1335), who was called *Rukn-i ʻālam*

(Support of the world) by the faithful. He was, as they call it, a hereditary *walī*: besides his grandfather, the founder of the fraternity, and his *sajjādanishīn* father he had his mother as well, the already referred to Bibi Pakdaman, who was also considered a saintly woman. Baha'uddin Zakariya had predicted an exceptional spiritual career for his favourite grandson when he was still in his mother's womb, and as soon as the boy was four years of age, tied his own turban around his head (by-passing Sadruddin, to his displeasure) in token of the transmission of *baraka* to him.

Permanently residing in Multan, Ruknuddin Abul Fath often visited Delhi on the invitation of the Sultans. For each visit he was paid two hundred thousand *tankā* at his arrival and five hundred thousand at his departure. Mubarak Shah Khalji and Ghiyathuddin Tughluq made an attempt to take advantage of Ruknuddin's presence in the capital to counterbalance Nizamuddin Awliya's influence. However, it came to nothing, because the thriving *shaikh* of the Suhrawardiyya nurtured a feeling of true admiration for the head of the Chishtiyya order, who had fallen out of favour, and used to visit him regularly in Ghiyathpur. Since Nizamuddin himself never visited the royal court, he used to hand over to Ruknuddin all the applications and petitions of the people of Delhi to the court and strove to ensure that they were duly considered.

Every time Ruknuddin left Ghiyathpur and went to the court, his *takht-i rawān* (a portable throne) was overloaded with papers and rolls containing complaints. The court was entered after passing through three courtyards. Ruknuddin had a serious problem with his leg and limped, which is why he would travel through the first two courtyards in his palanquin and then was greeted by the Sultan in the third one. The petitions would be brought in, and Ruknuddin would remain at the palace until all the requests had been granted.

Shaikh Ruknuddin was a peculiar harbinger of death: he was one of the last to see Nizamuddin Awliya and his enemy Ghiyathuddin Tughluq alive. Thus, the saint arrived in Afghanpur to meet the Sultan, returning from his campaign in Bengal, dined with him in the specially built pavilion and departed, not waiting for the evening reception. A few minutes after his departure the ill-fated pavilion collapsed, burying the Sultan under its debris, while Ruknuddin miraculously escaped death. Later in the same year he called upon Nizamuddin Awliya, seeking his blessings before departure for *Ḥajj*. *Sulṭān al-mashā'ikh* informed the guest that he had had a vision during which he saw Prophet Muhammad calling him to his presence. Having a presentiment that it was the end, Ruknuddin was overcome

with tears and took leave of his friend. In less than a week he was leading Nizamuddin's funeral prayer.

Although intimacy with the rulers enriched Ruknuddin's *khānqāh* and consolidated his influence, it ultimately brought him misfortune (which once again confirmed the correctness of the Chishtis' attitude towards authority). In the year 1328 the Governor of Multan, Kishlu Khan, rose in rebellion against Muhammad bin Tughluq. Ruknuddin, as had once his grandfather before him, sided with the ruler of Delhi. Having allowed himself to be involved in political conflict, he consented to his younger brother 'Imaduddin (who bore a resemblance to Muhammad bin Tughluq in face and figure) becoming a substitute for the Sultan in the royal palanquin at the time of the battle of Abuhar. 'Imaduddin was killed, and the Sultan, having taken advantage of premature rejoicing and confusion in the camp of the enemy, was able to gain victory. Unintentional complicity in his own brother's death broke Ruknuddin down: he completely withdrew from temporal affairs and did not even wish to intercede on behalf of the inhabitants of Multan, who became a victim of the Sultan's august anger. The hundred villages, granted by Muhammad bin Tughluq to the *khānqāh* in Multan as reward for the assistance rendered, were little consolation to him.

In the year 1333 the cloister in Multan was visited by Ibn Battuta, who talked to the saint and contributed a lot to the dissemination of his fame in the western lands of Islam. In the conversation with Ibn Battuta, Ruknuddin spoke in the main about humility and control over one's lower or animal soul, repeating the *āyat*: 'And I do not regard my soul free from [shortcomings], the soul is certainly an enjoiner of evil except that [soul on which] my Fosterer has had mercy' (12: 53). Maybe feelings of guilt and repentance were still tormenting him. The Arab traveller learnt from the saint's disciples the story of his miraculous escape in Afghanpur and that of his brother's death, which he has recounted in his travel notes (Ibn Battuta 1929: 207–9).

The same Ibn Battuta recounted in his *Riḥla* that Ruknuddin had nominated his grandson, Shaikh Hud, as a successor, but that his nephew Shaikh Isma'il had challenged the claim. Muhammad bin Tughluq gave his verdict in favour of Shaikh Hud whom an unpredictable Sultan later suspected of the financial misuse of *awqāf* income and issued orders for the seizure of the property of the Multani *khānqāh*. The disgraced Shaikh Hud planned to flee beyond the frontiers of the subcontinent, to Transoxania, but his plan was disclosed. This time the infuriated Sultan accused Shaikh Hud of

complicity in yet another Mongol invasion of Multan and on the pretext of this wholly fabricated charge of high treason Baha'uddin Zakaria's great-grandson was put to death. From his martyrdom began the decline of the *khānqāh* in Multan, and the centre of the Suhrawardiyya fraternity shifted to Ucch, where Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari's descendants were in charge.

The cult of Baha'uddin Zakariya, Rukn-i 'ālam and other members of this family is one of the most authoritative in today's Pakistan. In Multan, which is indeed famous for its tombs, reminders of the saints are everywhere – from the fort mound from where the city came into being to the Baha'uddin Zakariya University in one of the new localities. Rukn-i 'ālam's tomb, a universally recognized masterpiece of Islamic architecture of the times of the Delhi Sultanate, dominates the city landscape, being its highest point, and from where Multan can be seen spread before the eyes. The dome of the tomb, being twenty metres in diameter, is the second largest in the subcontinent. Ghiyathuddin Tughluq, who had earmarked it for himself, erected the tomb in the year 1320. However, Muhammad bin Tughluq arranged otherwise, having buried the father in Tughluqabad (near Delhi), he gave the grand mausoleum to his favourite saint.

Ruknuddin's *mazār* is a model of the so-called Multani architectural style, no analogies of which exist in South Asia. It is a three-storeyed, domed building, consisting of octagons of different diameters, placed one over the other. Eight round buttresses that taper gracefully upward support the lower tier, built of delicate salmon-pink bricks. They resemble the Central Asian corner columns, or *guldasta* and impart a powerful, heavy monumentality to the base of the mausoleum. The upper octagon, smaller in diameter, is thickly inlaid on pink brickwork with bands of blue and turquoise glazed tiles decorated with a floral pattern: these are the window frames and wall medallions. The eight arched openings of the second tier look like windows from below; actually they are arched doors, through which one can reach the roof of the lower octagon, enclosed with a fretted parapet. The roof of the upper tier is decorated with small cupolas having dark blue tops, which in their shape and colour are a replica of the tower cupolas of the lower tier, and they in their turn represent variations of décor of the main sphere of the mausoleum. Two wooden fretwork windows let light in at ground level, while eight windows of the second tier illuminate the inside of the huge dome.

Ruknuddin's tomb is one of the few ritual structures in the subcontinent which has not been totally rebuilt since the fourteenth century, yet at the same time it looks as if it has been erected recently.

A few years back its restorers were honoured with the prestigious Agha Khan Architectural Award. However, the interior of the building bears the obvious imprint of later alterations, in particular, the saint's *mazār*, the stone balustrade around it and the marble canopy, which date from 1930. The only original detail surviving in the interior is the fretted wooden *miḥrāb* in the western wall, one of the oldest in South Asia.

Not far from Ruknuddin's mausoleum, on the same fort mound, is his grandfather's tomb, built even before the death of Baha'uddin Zakaria's in 1262, and, what is noteworthy is that it was at his own expense, which is yet another evidence of financial independence, unique for a dervish. Probably the history of the Multani architectural style begins with Baha'uddin Zakariya, since his tomb also consists of two tiers, with only the lower one having a traditional square base, whereas the upper one is octagonal. The material and décor of the tomb are the same – bricks and blue ceramics. It features the earliest example of blue tilework in the subcontinent. In the year 1848, during the siege of Multan, the cupola and part of the upper tier were destroyed by the British cannon shells, but were restored later. In 1952 a spacious brick verandah with a painted wooden ceiling was added to the mausoleum, from where the massive carved wooden doors lead into the small burial chamber. There, under a fretted wooden canopy the mortal remains of the saint and his son Sadruddin are laid to rest.

Behind Baha'uddin Zakariya's tomb a mosque has subsequently been built. It is less than three feet from the back wall of the small Hindu temple of Prahlad Mandir. Its presence inside the *dargāh* enclosure proves that in the Indian subcontinent a Muslim such as Baha'uddin Zakariya, who was most rigorous and intolerant to 'unbelievers', is not immune to being in close proximity to *kāfirs*, even if posthumously. It is supposed that the temple was built on the site of an earlier sanctuary of the Sun god, about whose legendary image – a golden statue, embellished with jewels – the Chinese traveller Xuan Zang had written at length when he visited Multan in the year 614. The statue is mentioned frequently in books on history and geography in Arabic (for example in the works of Abul Hasan 'Ali al-Mas'udi). The Arab authors erroneously considered it to be Buddha's statue.[15]

Hundreds of smaller *mazārs* and graves are scattered around the mausoleum, some of which are quite recent: all the male representatives of this vast family in the course of seven hundred years are being laid to eternal rest in the *dargāh* in Multan. I, as

always, was interested in finding out, where the women, who had given birth to so many saints, were buried. It turned out that they are laid to rest inside Bibi Pakdaman's tomb, situated to the south of the fort, in Basti Daira locality. It is a typical 'residential' oblong tomb with a flat roof and an arched verandah in front, surmounted by two small cupolas. In the centre of a hall stands the high wooden cenotaph of the woman who was Baha'uddin Zakariya's daughter-in-law and Ruknuddin's mother, and whose nickname *Pākdāman* means 'innocent', 'virtuous'. Other women of this family have been laid to rest in the *tah-khāna* (basement) of this building.

As with other tombs of women saints, men are barred from admittance to Bibi Pakdaman's *dargāh*, which has female keepers. Adjacent to the tomb there is a sacred well, on the surface of which floats a carpet of rose petals which are brought as an offering to the saint. Women pilgrims perform ablution in this fragrant water in order to be healed of diseases, mainly barrenness. The branches of the banyan tree growing close to the reservoir are gay with a great number of multicoloured shreds of cloth and threads – it is considered that the supplicant's wish will be fulfilled once the threads rot or crumble to dust. Obviously Bibi Pakdaman's *baraka* has a specialized curative property, in addition to being connected with female fertility, whereas supplications are made to the males of her family in connection with a wider range of problems.

In the courtyard of Ruknuddin's tomb a band of *qawwāls* plays continuously. Side by side with them one may come across beggars and dervishes of the most preposterous appearance – with tousled hair, wearing flowing robes, decorated with iron bangles and necklaces. Some of them belong to the marginal sect Jalaliyya, and are considered to be *bē-shar'*. The Jalali order claims its lineage from Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari and is historically connected with the Surkh-Bukhari branch of Suhrawardiyya. Jalali dervishes did not have a permanent residence; they roamed all the time from Multan to Ucch and back. They were kept out of *musāfir-khāna* which is why they passed the night in tents and cardboard boxes close to the walls of the *dargāh*. At the sight of a Jalali dervish it is easy to understand why Baha'uddin Zakariya had an aversion to *juwāliqs*.

However, there is something paradoxical in the fact that the moderate and respectable Suhrawardiyya fraternity caused such an abnormal sprout to grow on the South Asian soil: although the Spiritual Sovereign of Multan did his best to guard himself from the local substratum, it overtook him within the limits of his own *silsila*, and that too in most deviant and aggressive forms.

7

THE WARRIOR SAINTS

When Hindus and Sikhs venerate the tombs of Muslim mystics and spiritual preceptors reputed to be saints, or even the places where two lovers whose love and death have become popular legend are buried, this is more or less understandable. Mysticism as an intuitive spiritual perception of God belongs to the field of natural and universal religion, but not at all to the field of revealed religion which is why at the mystic level there is no substantial difference between the various faiths. It is outside mystic experience where major differences are to be found. In the preceding chapters it has been seen that when a medieval mystic declared that there was no difference between *Ka'ba* and *mandir* (Hindu temple), between *Rām* and *Raḥmān*, this statement makes sense only in the sphere of mystic experience, where every phenomenal dualism is done away with, since outside this sphere everyone continues to adhere to the traditions and rites of his own faith.

From this point of view every mystic in medieval India, whether it were Baba Farid, Kabir or Guru Nanak, could partly be considered a *mu'aḥḥid* (Unitarian),[1] under which category came the people devoted to the idea of one God. As conceived by popular religion, not versed in dogmatics, differences between *awliyā* on the one hand and Sants, Naths and Bhaktas on the other were not really of particular importance.

The pilgrimage of Hindus to the graves of *ghāzīs*, i.e. warriors of Islam who propagated the Prophet's religion with fire and sword is, however, much more difficult to explain. The earliest and most widely-known sanctuary of this type is the *dargāh* of the miracle worker warrior *Sipāh Sālār*[2] Mas'ud Ghazi in Bahraich, near Ayodhya (in what is now Uttar Pradesh). The tradition of pilgrimage to the tomb had its origin apparently in the twelfth century during the rule of the Ghorids. The architectural complex of the tomb was

erected later, approximately in the year 1250, by Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was for some time in hiding in Bahraich due to the intrigues of other aspirants to the throne of Delhi. There is a reference to Salar Mas'ud in Amir Khusrow's historical work *Ĕʿjāz-i Khusrowī* ('Khusrow's Miracle') and in Barani's chronicle. According to the latter's information Salar Mas'ud Ghazi happened to be Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi's nephew and associate.

In the year 1340 Muhammad bin Tughluq performed a pilgrimage to Bahraich, accompanied by Ibn Battuta, who described not only the legends connected with the saint, but even some of the details of his cult, and in particular, the ritual of the veneration of the saint's banner and spear. In 1372 the *dargāh* was visited by another representative of the Tughluq dynasty, Firoz Shah, who considered himself to be the saint's spiritual disciple. As testified by the historian Shams Siraj 'Afif, the saint Salar Mas'ud appeared in the Sultan's dream, told him to adopt a tougher policy with respect to the followers of other religions, to propagate Islam more persistently, and also to get ready for the day of the Last Judgement. The next morning, says 'Afif, the Sultan got his head shaved, like a neophyte being initiated into a Sufi fraternity, and started spending every night in prayers.

Another eminent historian, Abul Fazl, refers to the popularity of Salar Mas'ud's cult, and describes how people from remote districts carry offerings and multicoloured flags to the saint's tomb. He mentions with concealed censure that multitudes of pilgrims set out from Agra to Bahraich by night, hollering, making merry and disturbing the Mughal capital. Abul Fazl's regal patron, the Mughal emperor Akbar, also showed particular interest in the warrior saint and in 1561, in the clothes of an ordinary merchant, he walked incognito through several stages with the pilgrims' procession on the way to the saint's '*urs* (Abu'l Fazl 1978: 212). However, not all the Indian sovereigns regarded the martyr from Bahraich with piety: Sikandar Lodhi in the year 1490 forbade the celebration of his '*urs* in the first week of the month of *jet'h* (May–June) on the pretext of the unseemliness of the rites being performed there.

The most comprehensive source of information about Salar Mas'ud is Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman Chishti's *Mir'āt-i Mas'ūdī* ('Mas'ud's Mirror'), compiled in the seventeenth century. Like most of the authors of hagiographic works Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman opens his book by recounting how the saint himself, whom he calls the Prince of Martyrs, appeared in his dream and inspired him to write the Mirror. He interprets numerous episodes of Salar Mas'ud's feats and miracles as visions, revealed from above. Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman

endeavours to include Salar Mas'ud in the Chishtiyya *silsila*, asserting that the saint was Mu'inuddin Sijzi's disciple. In witness of his statement he refers to the 'evidence' of contemporaries, who had supposedly observed how the founder of the Chishtiyya fraternity used to turn over the supplications addressed to him to the care of Salar Mas'ud. This obvious anachronism has been completely rejected by many medieval historians and hagiographers.

Mir'āt-i Mas'ūdī narrates that in the year 1011 Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi received envoys from the Muslims of Ajmer, seeking his support against the Hindu Rajas who were infringing upon their rights. As it was, the inhabitants of Ajmer were running the great risk of their request being denied them: they had not been mentioning Mahmud Ghaznavi's name in the *khuṭba*, i.e. the sermon accompanying the Friday prayer, in the course of which the *khaṭīb* prays for the living Caliph and the ruler. And it must be said that the mention of his name in the *khuṭba* was one of main external criteria for independence from a ruler in the Islamic world. In exchange for the inclusion of his name in the *khuṭba* Mahmud sent his troops to Ajmer under the command of Salar Shahu, who defeated the Rajas and subjugated the regions adjacent to the city. As a reward Mahmud gave his sister in marriage to the military leader, and on 14 February 1015, during a military campaign, the future saint, Salar Mas'ud, was born from this marriage.

As *Mir'āt-i Mas'ūdī* narrates, even in his childhood Mas'ud demonstrated his outstanding capabilities as a military leader. As a favourite of his warlike uncle, he accompanied him in all military campaigns, particularly during the celebrated expedition to Somnath in Kathiawar. It was Mas'ud who supposedly persuaded his uncle to demolish the famous idol of Somnath – a deed repeatedly glorified as a great feat in Persian poetry. Some of the courtiers, in particular Vizier Khwaja Hasan Maimandi, were against the demolition of the Somnath temple, but by his religious zeal young Mas'ud put the adult retinue of the Sultan to shame, who took action in accordance with his nephew's advice. With the demolition of Somnath begins the legendary career of Mas'ud as an invincible warrior.

At the age of 17 at the head of an Afghan army he arrived in Multan and, having subjugated it, made for Delhi, where he stayed for almost half a year. Then through Meerut he advanced towards the southeast, into Awadh: at first to Qannauj and then to Satrikh (now the district of Barabanki), where the troops of his father Salar Shahu joined him. In Satrikh, which had become the General Headquarters of the Afghan army, Salar Shahu died on 4 October 1032, and Mas'ud continued

the aggressive campaigns on the territories of the eastern part of present Uttar Pradesh, on the way demolishing pagan temples and converting the local population to Islam under the threat of death.

During an expedition he arrived in Bahraich, where he became interested in the ruins of a temple of a sun god on the banks of a reservoir, considered to be sacred by Hindus. According to ʻAbdur Rahman Chishti, Masʻud time and again declared that he wanted to erect a mosque on these ruins, in order to neutralize the evil spell of the material sun with the power of the spiritual sun of Islam. Ultimately, in the course of a battle on 15 June 1034 Masʻud was mortally wounded with an arrow and, while dying, expressed his last wish to be buried on the banks of the sacred reservoir. Local tradition says that Masʻud's head lies precisely where there used to be the image or the sign of the sun, for which, in order to neutralize its 'evil spell', the young warrior of Islam had lain down his life. Having been killed while fulfilling his duty as a soldier, Salar Masʻud became a *shahīd* (martyr) and earned the honorary nickname of *Ghāzī Miyāñ* (Master Warrior for Faith).

Probably Shaikh ʻAbdur Rahman considered that the evidence of Ghazi Miyan's sainthood furnished by him was convincing enough, but quite a number of hagiographers have not agreed with him. In early *ṭabaqāt-i awliyā* there is absolutely no mention of Ghazi Miyan, whereas in later collections (for example, in *Jawāhir-i farīdī*) he is called 'patron of infidels'. As far as ordinary believers are concerned, in general they needed no evidence whatsoever: the saint's *baraka* exerted a direct influence on them during Ghazi Miyan's ʻ*urs*, which was observed on the twelfth to the fourteenth of the month of *Rajab* and attracted every year up to two hundred thousand pilgrims.

As the small town of Bahraich could not accommodate all comers, brick platforms or *chabūtara*, where the ceremony of the veneration of Ghazi Miyan's banner was performed, were erected even in other towns of Awadh, in particular, in Salargarh, named in honour of the saint, and in Faizabad, Satrikh and Rudawli. In the saint's cult the aspect of curative magic was predominant, and accordingly people started venerating him as a miracle worker, curing leprosy.[3] The most active part of Salar Masʻud's 'flock' was the Mewatis (or Meo), the inhabitants of the historic district of Mewat, to the south of Delhi. They were converted to Islam, under compulsion, in as far back as the eleventh century, and ascribed their conversion to Ghazi Miyan, which is why they strictly observe rituals of the veneration of the saint's banner and of offering him multicoloured flags and spears. Conversion to Islam left the mode of the Mewatis' life almost

untouched; they introduced elements of popular Indian rituals into Ghazi Miyan's veneration. Thus, for example, on being cured of disease they used to offer to the saint figurines of horses made of dough which were distributed amongst pilgrims during the '*urs*.

If the Muslims venerated Ghazi Miyan in the first place as a warrior for faith and a martyr, the Hindus called him by affectionate nicknames, emphasizing the saint's young age: *Bāle Miyāñ* (Revered Boy), *Bāle Pīr* (Boy Saint),[4] *Hat'hīle Pīr* (Obstinate Saint) (Rizvi 1986: 314). The last nickname is especially interesting: one often comes across the word *hat'hīlā* (obstinate, teasing) in Krishna-*bhakti* songs (*bhajans*) as an epithet for young Krishna, a naughty, obstinate and mischievous child. This nickname, as with the other affectionate names, by laying emphasis on the saint's young age, automatically suggests the idea that in the consciousness of the Hindus Salar Mas'ud's historical personality became identified with child Krishna, the most acclaimed hero of popular Hinduism.

There is probably even an erotic aspect that is also connected with the Indian substratum, which was imparted to Ghazi Miyan's cult and which was at variance with the historical prototype of the saint – a stern warrior and ruthless propagator of the faith. According to popular legend, not confirmed by *Mir'āt-i Mas'ūdī*, shortly before his death Ghazi Miyan married Zuhra Bibi, a girl of noble birth from Rudawli, having cured her of blindness beforehand. The latter 'fact' is highly typical for the Indian hagiographic literature in general: numerous Sufis and saints married girls miraculously cured by them. Mas'ud and his bride managed only to conclude the marriage-contract, but actually the marriage was not consummated: the bridegroom was killed before the nuptial night, and Zuhra Bibi remained a virgin. After her death she was also buried in Bahraich, but a stone from her burial-vault was taken to Rudawli, where another cenotaph was built (*Gazetteer of Oudh* 1985: 236).

Here on the first Sunday of *Jet'h* a fair called *Zŏhra-melā* was celebrated annually, attracting rural Muslims and Hindus of lower castes. On the festival day pilgrims used to bring offerings, called 'Zuhra's dowry', to the saint's wife (*Gazetteer of Oudh* 1985: 132), the main offering being the nuptial bed. Some rites of Ghazi Miyan's '*urs* in Bahraich also reproduced the wedding ceremony. Two boys in the regalia of bridegroom and bride, depicting Ghazi Miyan and Zuhra, were seated on an eminence, and this tradition cannot but remind one of a similar representation of a young couple – Rama and Sita – during *Rāmlīla*, when the Northern Indian folk dance drama recounting the stories from the epic Ramayana is performed.

It is superfluous to observe that such types of rituals ran counter to the prevalent Muslim practice of the veneration of saints, which rules out dramatization or anything erotic, including a nuptial aspect. The fact that the features of 'obstinate' youngster and bridegroom became manifest in the image of the warrior saint is undoubtedly indicative of the Indian influence, in particular, the Vaishnawa cult. It is not unlikely that in the hypostasis of obstinate youngster Ghazi Miyan's image became united with the traits of Lord Krishna and as a warrior and heroic husband he was identified with Lord Rama, whose birthplace and cult centre were in the very neighbourhood of Ayodhya, which was close to Bahraich.

The main ritual of Ghazi Miyan's cult – the veneration of his '*alam* (banner) – is the so-called 'fact of twin motivation'. The veneration of a military banner and processions with flags and spears, which became a part of the saint's cult no later than the fourteenth century, are typical also for Shi'a mourning rites in the month of *Muḥarram*, which became widespread in the neighbouring districts of Faizabad and Lucknow in the eighteenth century. Obviously, the rituals of the saint's '*urs* had a direct effect on the formation of the ritual practices of the Shi'a of Awadh. However, a procession of pilgrims with multicoloured flags, and also the veneration of *jhandā* (banner), is a constituent part of many indigenous Indian rituals, pertaining even to the pre-Islamic epoch (for example, the *pūjā* of God Indra's banner or staff).

Representatives of normative Islam clearly realized the 'pagan' substratum of Ghazi Miyan's cult. It has already been mentioned that certain rulers had forbidden the celebration of his '*urs* on account of the elements of nuptial eroticism in the saint's veneration ritual. In the nineteenth century veneration of Ghazi Miyan by Hindus provoked ironic bewilderment amongst Englishmen. The British Resident in Awadh, William Sleeman, wrote: 'Strange to say, Hindoos as well as Mahommedans make offerings to this shrine, and implore the favours of this military ruffian, whose only recorded merit consists of having sent a great many Hindoos to hell, in a wanton and unprovoked invasion of their territory' (Sleeman 1971: 69).

The saint's authority did not wane with the passage of time, however. Even in the eighteenth century the great Punjabi Sufi poet, Warith Shah, names him among the legendary group of the most venerated saints – the Five *Pīrs*. Neither Naqshbandiyya reaction, nor Puritanim of the Wahhabis, nor reformists' criticism could undermine the foundations of the saint's cult. Those who could not reach Bahraich celebrated Ghazi Miyan's '*urs* at his fellow-fighters' tombs

(mostly fabricated ones), which are scattered over a vast territory extending from Uttar Pradesh to Bengal.

Thus in various districts the following *mazārs* of Salar Mas'ud's military officers were venerated: in Gopalau – the *mazār* of Makhdum 'Azizuddin (also known as Lal Pir), in Qannauj – the grave of the army *kotwāl* Miyan Rajab, and in Tambaur – the mausoleum of Burhanuddin. Finally, in Satrikh even the saint's father Salar Shahu's *mazār*, called Birdha Baba by Hindus, became a place of pilgrimage. According to popular belief, after their martyr's death the men in Ghazi Miyan's army became not only saints, but also ghosts. Miyan Rajab, for example, could appear before the eyes of the people in the form of a headless horseman. At night in the suburbs of Faizabad wayfarers used to come across a whole army of the saint's soldiers turned into ghosts (Crooke 1968: 232).

Obviously, several factors were conducive to the transformation of Salar Mas'ud's tomb into an 'inter-religious sanctuary'. First, the saint's *mazār* has been erected where there used to be a sun temple, and it was on the banks of a sacred reservoir, in short at a place consecrated by tradition. Here historical topography itself became the source of syncretism. Second, there took place a mutual identification of the saint's image with local deities, most likely with Rama and Krishna. In this case it so happened that emphasis was laid upon secondary elements of the saint's life (his young age, the legend about his marriage), and the basic historical facts (military feats, proselytizing activity) were relegated to the background. In other words the veneration of Ghazi Miyan is the fruit of synthesis and the mutual identification of two traditions, in the process of which Muslim *ziyārat* played the role of substratum, whereas the Hindu practice of pilgrimage was vested with the function of amplifying a resonator.

The cult of the *Ghāzī*, and consequently of warrior saints, was particularly developed in medieval Bengal, the Islamization of which took place in several stages. Jalaluddin Tabrizi, who had started proselytizing amongst the Bengalis, was not averse to methods involving force. His mission was continued by Shah Jalal (died in 1347), the saint who is credited with the conversion of the inhabitants of East Bengal, and whose tomb in Sylhet (Bangladesh) even up to the present day is a place of pilgrimage. Muhammad Ghawthi Shattari has described Shah Jalal's life in the hagiographic collection *Gulzār-i Abrār*.

Shah Jalal was born in Turkestan where he was initiated into *silsila-i Khwājagān*. He considered himself a *khalīfa* of Sayyid Ahmad

Yasavi (died 1169), the eponym of Yasaviyya *ṭarīqa*, who had died long before Shah Jalal was born. Shah Jalal was given an assignment in Bengal, which was called *dār al-ḥarb* ('territory of war'). This was the term used by Muslim *faqīhs* to denote non-Muslim countries, which were at war with the faithful, whereas the absence of military operations was considered to be an armistice. The purpose of Shah Jalal was to transform Bengal into *dār al-ṣulḥ* ('the territory of a peace treaty'), i.e. into a region which has, on being conquered, concluded a treaty (*ṣulḥ*) determining the extent of tribute and the legal status of non-Muslim inhabitants.

Shah Jalal was not a peaceful Sufi missionary of the type wandering about in great numbers in towns and villages of the Delhi Sultanate. His *pīr* had blessed him for *jihād* (holy war) against infidels and had sent to Bengal seven hundred armed *ghāzī*, almost a military detachment, to accompany him. On the way to Bengal, the saint stopped off in Delhi, where he was received with due respect by Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji (ruled 1290–6), who reinforced the detachment of missionaries with military units of his army. In Bengal the saint's army indulged in pillage to such an extent that the riches looted in the course of this expedition were enough to sustain Shah Jalal's comfortable life for many years. The principles of the Naqshbandiyya (an order-descendant of *silsila-i Khwājagān*), in contrast to the Chishtiyya doctrine, were not against forced conversion to Islam and the annihilation of inveterate pagans. That is why the path of Shah Jalal along the towns and villages of Bengal was strewn with the dead bodies of those who offered resistance to his mission.

The apotheosis of Shah Jalal's military activity became the battle of Sylhet, where the saint had arrived with a depleted detachment consisting of not more than three hundred men. The uninvited guests were confronted by the Raja of Bengal Gaur Govind, who had put together an army of hundred thousand infantrymen and several hundred mounted soldiers (it should not be forgotten that these figures are given not by a historian but by the author of a hagiographic work). In spite of such a numerical advantage, the Raja's army was routed, which was, of course, indicative of the power of the *baraka* of the saint.

After the battle of Sylhet a part of the territory of East Bengal submitted to Shah Jalal. He granted large landed estates to his associates, who took up residence there and settled down to life as married men. Shah Jalal himself remained celibate and earned the nickname Shah Mujarrad (Shah Bachelor). The threat of the Mongol conquests forced him to leave the place which they had occupied for

so long. He set off to Baghdad and from there he went to Multan and Ucch where he took initiation into the Suhrawardiyya order from Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fath. He then visited Delhi where, according to tradition, he met Nizamuddin Awliya, which is in accordance with the life histories of both saints. The journey of Shah Jalal back to Bengal in the first half of the fourteenth century took place quite peacefully: he finally settled down in Sylhet, by that time subjugated for the second time by the Governor of Bengal, Shamsuddin Firoz, and, having built a *khānqāh*, started leading the secluded life of a hermit.

The most interesting and authentic information about the saint comes from Ibn Battuta, who visited East Bengal in 1345. He has, in particular, written:

> I set out from Sudkawan [Chittagong – A. S.] for the mountains of Kamaru [Kamrup, a region on the border of East Bengal and Assam – A. S.], a month's journey from there . . . My purpose in travelling to these mountains was to meet a notable saint who lives there, namely, Shaykh Jalal ad-Din of Tabriz. At a distance of two days' journey from his abode I was met by four of his disciples, who told me that the Shaykh had said to the darwishes who were with him: 'The traveller from the West has come to you; go out to welcome him'. He had no knowledge whatever about me, but this had been revealed to him. I went with them to the Shaykh and arrived at his hermitage, situated outside the cave. There is no cultivated land there, but the inhabitants of the country, both Muslim and infidel, come to visit him, bringing gifts and presents, and the darwishes and travellers live on these offerings. The Shaykh however limits himself to a single cow, with whose milk he breaks his fast every ten days. It was by his labours that the people of these mountains became converted to Islam, and that was the reason for his settling amongst them. When I came into his presence he rose to greet me and embraced me. He asked me about my native land and my travels, and when I had given him an account of them he said to me: 'You are a traveller of the Arabs'. Those of his disciples who were there, said: 'And the non-Arabs too, O our master'. 'And of the non-Arabs too' he repeated, to show him honour. They then took me to the hermitage and gave me hospitality for three days.
>
> (Ibn Battuta 1929: 268–9)

Further on Ibn Battuta narrates a story quite in the spirit of *manāqib*, confirming Shah Jalal's miraculous gift of clairvoyance. At the traveller's request, at his departure the saint gave him a mantle of goat's hair. At the same time the Saint foretold that this mantle would be taken away from him by a certain 'infidel sultan', who in turn would make a present of it to Burhan ad-Din of Sagharji, for whom the mantle had been made. In reply Ibn Battuta vowed that he would never appear wearing his mantle in the presence of any ruler, whether Muslim or infidel. After a long time, while travelling through China, Ibn Battuta found himself in Khansa [Hang-chow-fu], where his mantle caught the local ruler's fancy, and the traveller was obliged to give it away in exchange for generous gifts. The same year Ibn Battuta found himself in Peking, where the Muslim mystic and missionary Burhan ad-Din Sagharji was preaching.

To Ibn Battuta's inconceivable astonishment he found Burhan ad-Din in his cell wearing the same wonderful mantle which had been taken away from him by the ruler of Hang-chow. Shah Jalal's prediction had come true. 'This mantle', explained Burhan ad-Din, 'was made specially for me by my brother Jalal ad-Din, who wrote to me saying "The mantle will reach you by the hand of so-and-so" ' (Ibn Battuta 1929: 270). Ibn Battuta was astounded by the perfect foreknowledge of the saint of Bengal, and the Chinese missionary's response no doubt added to his fervour:

> 'My brother Jalal ad-Din can do much more than all this, he has the powers of creation at his disposal, but he has now passed to the mercy of God. I have been told' he added, 'that he prayed the dawn-prayer every day in Mecca, and that he made the pilgrimage every year, for he used to disappear from sight on the days of 'Arafa and the festival, and no one knew where he went.'
>
> (Ibn Battuta 1929: 270)

Unfortunately Ibn Battuta mistook Shah Jalal for his more famous predecessor, Jalaluddin Tabrizi Suhrawardi, already mentioned more than once in this book, but, first, the latter died in 1244 and could not have met Ibn Battuta one hundred years later and, second, he had nothing to do with Sylhet; his *khānqāh* was situated in Lakhnauti (Abdar Rahim 1960: 43). Ibn Battuta's mistake began to be accepted in one hagiographic work after another, then filtered into the scientific literature, and in the very recent past Annemarie Schimmel has referred to Jalaluddin Tabrizi's sanctuary in Sylhet (Schimmel 1980: 48).

Having finally settled down in Bengal, Shah Jalal did not leave it till his very death, but people's faith in his wonder-working powers was so great that the tradition, retold by Ibn Battuta, was maintained that every day he performed *namāz* in Mecca and then in the twinkling of an eye returned to Sylhet. For that matter, this 'miracle' is a commonplace of the entire Indian hagiography: even Amir Khurd, who usually endeavours to avoid stories about *karāmāt*, writes that every morning a flying camel used to carry away Nizamuddin Awliya to Ka'ba and bring him back by the first breakfast (Amir Khurd 1978: 152). The cult of Shah Jalal's veneration in no way reflects his military feats and his status as a *ghāzī*: in contrast to Bahraich, no banners and spears are held at his *mazār* in Sylhet.

Like many other saints of East Bengal Shah Jalal gradually acquired the traits of a guardian of waters and patron of trades connected with water, for example fishermen and boatmen. The rites of the saint's veneration are bound up with the sacred pond, adjacent to his tomb. In the pond, where the faithful perform ritual ablutions, there are huge fish, and the feeding of these fish is the principal pious act of *ziyārat* to Sylhet. If the fish eat the offering, the pilgrim's supplication will be heard. In this sense Shah Jalal's cult is quite similar to the rites of veneration of Mangho Pir or Bayazid Bistami in Chittagong and, again, is influenced by Hindu rituals.

Connection of the saints of East Bengal with the element of water has manifested itself even in the image of the sailor saint Pir Badr (who died in 1420), the centre of whose activity became Chittagong (in the territory of what is now Bangladesh). Like Salar Mas'ud and Shah Jalal, Shaikh Badruddin or Pir Badr-i 'ālam is a historical person; references to him are to be found not only in hagiographic works but also in Badauni's famous *Munta<u>kh</u>ab at-tawārī<u>kh</u>*. This historian, in particular, refers to the saint's grandfather, a certain Shihabuddin nicknamed 'Haqq-go' (Telling the truth or Truthful), who was executed on Muhammad bin Tughluq's orders because he publicly called this Sultan a tyrant. Pir Badr spent his childhood in Meerut and was educated in Multan where he was initiated into the Suhrawardiyya order by Jalaluddin Bukhari. Later, at the invitation of Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri, he moved to Bihar where was initiated into the Firdawsiyya order, which was predominant in that province. He married into a Bihari Hindu family and set off for Sonargaon and Chittagong in East Bengal.

In the second half of the fourteenth century the Sultan of Sonargaon, Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah (during whose rule Ibn Battuta visited Bengal), went on several military expeditions for the purpose of

subjugating Chittagong. Pir Badr participated in one of these expeditions, having disembarked with a military detachment of mercenaries on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. At that time Chittagong was a small settlement, its environs were covered with thick humid forests, marshes and shallow bays. Constant floods and hurricanes made it an unattractive place, and no wonder that among Bengali Muslims it was considered to be an abode of evil spirits. Pir Badr's decision to remain in this desolate territory puzzled his companions. However, Pir Badr's ascetic life and preaching made a great impression upon the inhabitants of Assam, Tripura and the Hindus of the Magh[5] tribe who inhabited the Arakan region that borders on Burma. It was in their midst that the two main legends about the saint took shape, according to which he reached the shore of Chittagong atop a drifting rock and travelled to Arakan on the back of a huge fish, which is how his arrival in Bengal aboard a ship was interpreted by hagiographers.

A gradual process of embellishment and the cyclic evolution of these legends led to the veneration of Pir Badr as the guardian saint of waters and the patron saint of sailors. Before setting off on a sea voyage sailors used to invoke the saint's blessing in the prayer:

> *Amara achchi popalan*
> *Gazi achche nigahman,*
> *Shire Ganga dariya Panch pir,*
> *Badr, Badr, Badr*
> We are children and the Ghazi is our protector,
> The river Ganges is over us.
> Oh Panch Pir [Oh, the five saints], Oh Badr, Badr!
> (Rizvi 1986: 316)

From this invocation follows, first, the recognition of the status of *ghāzī* in respect of Pir Badr; second, the connection of this saint with the aforementioned cult of Five *Pīr*; and third, the prevalence of Pir Badr's cult amongst Hindus (in the reference to the Ganges as the sacred celestial river). Indeed the Bengali version of Five *Pīrs* is inclusive of Pir Badr (along with Ghazi Miyan, Jalaluddin Tabrizi, Shaikh Farid and Khwaja Khizr). Another invocation to Pir Badr is connected with the custom of sailors and boatmen to throw small coins into the water in order to ensure a safe voyage:

> *Dariyā ke pānch paise kī qurbānī, Are Badr, Badr, Badr!*
> We are sacrificing five *paise* to the river, oh Badr, Badr, Badr!
> (Asad 'Ali 1979: 208)

It is known that before undertaking a voyage through the Bay of Bengal, sailors and merchants, praying for a fair wind and seeking protection from the Burmese and Portuguese pirates, used to give a promise in writing to Pir Badr to pay a certain amount in his name. When a ship safely reached Chittagong special port officials used to board the ship and collect from the crew and the passengers the amount promised by them for payment to the saint. This ritual, apparently, is older than Pir Badr's cult: even Ibn Battuta writes about it, connecting it with the name of the seafarers' patron saint Abu Ishaq Kazeruni (who died in 1035), to whom Indian sailors, on the way to the China Sea, used to pay money as promised (Trimingham 1971: 236).

People also used to apply to Pir Badr for help during floods, which are very frequent in the coastal regions of East Bengal. After collective *ziyārat* of the devotees to the saint's tomb, the waters miraculously abated. According to popular etymology this manifestation of *karāmāt* called into being the distorted form of the saint's name, *Badar-rao* (as a result of mistakenly merging together the words *badr* and *rā'o*: the latter word in Indian languages means 'prince' or 'chief'), which together means 'channel for water' or 'drain' (whereas the saint's name in Arabic means 'full moon') (Asad 'Ali 1979: 145).

Pir Badr's connection with water has manifested itself in the main ritual of his veneration: during the days of the saint's '*urs* people used to visit the village pond or the neighbouring river and float small bunches of grass on the water, on which, as on rafts, they placed lighted lamps. Everyone knows that lights floating on water are typical of *Diwālī* rituals and many other religious festivals of the Hindus. Very similar were the veneration rituals of the legendary saint *K͟hwāja K͟hiḍr* (*al-Khaḍir*), whom the Hindus of East Bengal depicted travelling on a fish and that is why they identified him with *matsya* – the 'fish' *avatār* of Lord Vishnu.

The mysterious figure of Khwaja Khizr, the green-clad hero of Muslim legends and tales, shows through the outlines of the historical image of many South Asian saints. Travelling together with Iskandar (Alexander of Macedonia), he drank deep from the spring of the water of life and became immortal; hence his most popular nickname *Zinda Pīr*. Commentators of the Qur'ān consider that in the *āyat* 60–81 of the *sūra* 'The Cave' there is reference to Khizr as a preceptor and companion of the Prophet Musa (Moses), revealing secret mystic truth to the latter. If in popular tales Khizr used to come to the aid of wayfarers who had lost their way and of people in trouble, to Sufis he appeared all the time in visions and dreams.

> Generally identified with Ilyās (Elias) as 'the servant of God', conductor and instructor of Moses . . . al-Khaḍir possesses *ḥikma* (wisdom) . . . and *al-ism al-a'ẓam* (the greatest Name), knowledge of which confers saintship and ability to do supra-normal things. Hypostatized as a person he represents in Sufi thought the inner light of *wilāya*, parallel to, and contrasted with, the apostolic-legalistic aspects of prophecy signified by Moses.
>
> (Trimingham 1971: 158)

If for theorists of Sufism Khizr remained the mysterious spirit of Muslim gnosis and an indispensable link in the chain of spiritual succession (*silsila al-baraka*), in popular Islam he acquired the traits of the spirit or even the deity of rivers, springs and wells. Khwaja Khizr was invoked by sailors and boatmen, beseeching him to help them cross over to the other shore (*Ay Kh̲wāja Kh̲iḍr beṛā pār*). Khizr was also identified with prophet Ilyas (the Biblical Elijah), having a stable connotation with water in all Semitic religions. It is interesting that the festival in honour of Khizr, celebrated in the first half of the month of *Bhādoñ* in North India and accompanied by the floating on water of little paper boats with lighted earthen saucers, was called '*Ilyās kī kishtī*' (Boat of Ilyas).[6]

The saints of Bengal like Shah Jalal, Pir Badr and the Five *Pīrs* in various aspects of their miracle-working activity play the role of Khizr's substitutes: they guard sources of water, they miraculously move about in water, they come at the last moment to the aid of the needy, mostly sailors, fishermen and those who are drowning. All the rituals of their veneration in some way or other are performed in water: bathing in sacred ponds, the feeding of sacred fish or tortoises, the floating of lamps on a river, etc. The etiology of these cults is typical for East Bengal, which is indeed a country of water, where traffic travels mainly on waterways, and agriculture (the cultivation of rice and jute) and other spheres of economy were closely connected with rivers, lakes and canals. The theme of water permeates even the folklore of East Bengalis, the poetry of *bāuls*, the sailors' songs *bhāt'ijāli* and *bāromāsī* (the songs of seamen's wives, longing in separation for their husbands).

Let us return to Pir Badr. At the end of his life he left Chittagong and returned to the places of his youth, Bihar, and that is where he was buried in a tomb, called *Chhot'ī Dargāh* (Little *Dargāh*). At the same time dummy tombs of the saint were erected on the riverside in Chittagong, Arakan and Tripura. The main centre of the saint's cult,

asthāna, is the same hillock in Chittagong where his *zāwiya* (cell) was situated, and where he used to meditate and pray during his lifetime. Hindus and Buddhists of Arakan used to offer to the tomb the income from their neighbouring villages, instituting a kind of *waqf*, and thereby transformed it into a centre of pilgrimage. Pir Badr's popularity in the regions bordering on Burma made the English travellers and scholars of the past century think that he was a Burmese saint.

Although the South Asian saints from time to time actively interfered in politics, in the Middle Ages their participation in the expansion of Islam by force of arms was more limited than in other Muslim countries. When in 1327 Muhammad bin Tughluq exhorted Sufis to enter into a *jihād* against the Mongols, who had devastated Punjab and districts around Delhi, most of them refused to collaborate with the authorities, as their hostility to the Sultan was more intense than their fear of Timur's conquests. In India it is difficult to find analogies with wandering Turkish dervishes – *bābā*, who used to stiffen the fighting spirit of *ghāzīs* in Anatolia in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries.

It is no less complicated to detect a connection between Indian Sufi fraternities and clandestine militarized organizations of artisans or aristocracy *futuwwa*, a connection about which many researchers of the Turkish and Near Eastern Sufism write as if about something which goes without saying. For the Indian Sufis *futuwwa* was not the aggregate of chivalrous and martial virtues but an ethical ideal, in accordance with which others' spiritual welfare had to be given preference over one's own. Besides this they interpreted the concept of *jihād* itself in spiritual sense, as a mortification of the sinful soul on the path of its purification, or *mujāhada*. Furthermore the South Asian Sufis did not have to come forward in defence of Islam against external enemies, Christians, as their brothers and contemporaries did in the Near East: ʻAbdallah al-Yunini, nicknamed Asad ash-Sham (Lion of Syria) who participated in Saladin's campaigns; Ahmad al-Badawi, whose preaching activity spread widely during the Crusade of Louis IX; and al-Jazuli, who came out against the Portuguese threat to the independence of the Muslim Maghrib. Only considerably later, at the end of eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, did the Indian Sufis and *awliyā* stand upon the front line of the Muslim resistance to colonial expansion. The most widely known of them attained martyrdom, like Ahmad Shahid (1786–1831) and Ismaʻil Shahid (1781–1831), founders of the *mujāhidūn* movement, and were ranked among the saints.

There were, however, a few South Asian saints who called their disciples *akhī* (brothers), analogous to the name used by Turkish craft-guilds, who were considered to be warriors for the faith. In the fraternities instituted by them rituals of initiation were borrowed from *futuwwa*. If one were to believe Ibn Battuta, *akhī* and *futuwwa* were synonymous concepts:

> An *Akhi*, in their [Turkish] idiom, is a man whom the assembled members of his trade, together with others of the young unmarried men and those who have adopted the celibate life, chose to be their leader. This is [what is called] *al-futuwwa* also . . . Nowhere in the world have I seen men more chivalrous in conduct than they are.
>
> (*The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1962, 1: 419)

Although the system of *akhī* in its Turkish form does not have analogues in Indian medieval society, it is obvious that Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari's grandson, Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht, famous for his puritanism and religious militancy, made use of it as a model for the Jalaliyya order founded by him. Thus, Jalali neophytes wrapped their belts around their waists and tied their turbans in a special way and were given some salty water to drink at the time of their initiation into *futuwwa*, and the same procedure was followed during initiation into the maternal Suhrawardiyya order. Jahangasht called his disciples *akhī* and borrowed his ideal of spiritual brotherhood from the Anatolian craft-guilds and the *akhī* and *futuwwa* organizations in Khurasan and Transoxania. 'Like the Ayyars of Iraq and Iran who were associated with the Futuwwa organizations, the Akhis were also warriors of the faith and claimed to have restored Islam to its pristine purity' (Rizvi 1986: 281).

At the same time both Jalalis as well as Madari dervishes who were similar to them had a bad reputation for being *bē-shar'*. Armed with *kat'ārs* (daggers) and *lāt'hīs* (battle cudgels) they were the indispensable participants in urban turmoil and disturbances, the most active part of an urban rabble, instantly responding to any instigation for mutiny. In the year 1659, during the disorders in Delhi connected with the execution of Shaikh Sarmad and Dara Shikoh, dervishes of these orders converged in the capital in groups, burning houses and plundering and ransacking the shops of Hindu tradesmen. In peacetime Jalalis and Madaris lived by begging in bazaars and fairs, or entertained the mob with *istidrāj* ('dirty miracles' or 'divine deception') of the lowest sort: thus, for example, Jalalis, who were Shi'a, used to

swallow living snakes and scorpions, calling them 'Imam 'Ali's fishes and shrimps'.

The eponym of the Madariyya order, Zinda Shah Madar, who has already been referred to in this book, was not a warrior of Islam, but carried out *jihād* throughout his life against those who, as it turned out, constituted the milieu of his posthumous devotees – i.e. the Hindus of Awadh. Although Badi'uddin Shah Madar is apparently also a historical person, the actual facts of his life have been dissolved in the great number of legends surrounding this saint. The basic source of information about him, the hagiographic *Mir'āt-i Madārī* ('Madar's Mirror', 1654) of Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman Chishti, the author of the above-mentioned *Mir'āt-i Mas'ūdī*. He narrates that the saint was born in Aleppo in 1315. At the same time other hagiographic texts mention 1050 as Shah Madar's date of birth, asserting that he lived for about four hundred years. Equally improbable seem to be the legends of Madariyya, which purport that its founder did not take food over a period of twelve years and never washed and did not change his clothes, since throughout his Methuselahian life he remained in a state of unsullied ritual purity.

By birth Shah Madar was a Jew. Madariyya's legend insists that he adopted Islam in Najaf and took initiation from the Shi'a twelfth 'hidden' Imam, Muhammad bin al-Hasan. Considerably more probable seems to be the version of *Mir'āt-i Madārī*, according to which the saint adopted Islam in Mecca under the influence of his meeting with the well-known Sufi Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (who died in 1415). The same Simnani, whose *murīd* Shah Madar became, sent him to India, where the future saint visited Ajmer Sharif, and subsequently lived for some time in Kalpi and Jaunpur. The peevish disposition of the future saint was the source of his constant conflicts with Qadir Shah, the ruler of Kalpi and with the Sultan of Jaunpur, Ibrahim Sharqi. In a fit of temper Madar cursed the former, so that the entire body of the ruler became covered with boils.

Having failed to get on with the high and mighty of this world, Shah Madar settled down in the small town of Makanpur (now Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh), where he terrified the whole district: an infidel (that is, a Hindu) had only to look at his face and he (i.e. the infidel) instantly fainted away. Apparently, that is why Shah Madar's face was always covered with a veil, which, in the opinion of his followers, brought him close to the images of the Prophet, to whom he directly traced his spiritual genealogy. The saint's foes, and there were quite a lot of them both among the '*ulamā* and among moderate mystics, used to compare Shah Madar with the

eighth-century false prophet al-Muqanna of Khurasan, whose face was also always covered with a veil, but certainly not because divine radiance emanated from it.[7]

In order to convert pagans to the true faith, the saint did not choose the path of spiritual *jihād*: he used to inflict upon the inhabitants of neighbouring villages hordes of snakes and scorpions, which were, apparently, under his command. He also invoked natural calamities on them, destroyed their standing crops and killed their babies. After a few years of such an original proselytizing activity the district of Makanpur was completely Islamized.

One only has to wonder at the good nature of the Hindus of Awadh, who after all the torture nonetheless proclaimed Shah Madar to be an incarnation of Lakshman, God Rama's brother, and became the main adherents of his posthumous cult. Muslims regarded the short-tempered saint with less reverence; in their midst his role was limited to the status of corporate protector of those of low caste: *bhat'hiyārā* (innkeepers), *kahār* (palanquin bearers), *bhānd'* (vagrant actors and conjurers), i.e. representatives of employment connected with roads and journeys. In this sense the image of Zinda Shah Madar was identified with the epitome of the roving character, Khizr, the chief patron of wayfarers.

Apparently Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi was also a forgiving person, who, in spite of the quarrels with Shah Madar in his lifetime, erected a tomb for him in 1434, which immediately turned into a centre of pilgrimage and a place for the saint's veneration. The *dargāh* in Makanpur was reputed to be miracle working. The Madari dervishes who lived there used to walk half-naked, but at the same time were armed, covered their body with ash, tied iron chains around their neck, adorned their heads with black turbans and made their appearance everywhere with black flags in their hands – an infernal appearance indeed. They did not observe the mandatory time of prayer and fast; swallowed a lot of Indian hemp (*bhāṅg*) and, being in a state of narcotic intoxication all the time, got involved in scuffles with pilgrims and local inhabitants, continuing the tradition of their eponym. It has already been mentioned that in search of piquant sensations they used to betake themselves to the capital or other big cities, where they took part in more serious conflicts. The Madari dervishes' favourite pastime was to sit around a bonfire and tell fantastic stories about the founder of their sect.

One of these legends, which is downright blasphemous, claims that during *Mi'rāj* the Prophet reached the gates of paradise and discovered that they were narrower than the eye of a needle. Not

knowing how to get inside, he asked the angel *Jibrīl* about it and the latter explained that the Prophet should exclaim *Dam Madār* ('Madar is Life!'), the ritual formula of Madariyya (it also means 'do not breathe', 'hold your breath', and in a profane vulgar sense, to 'croak!'). Only having done justice to the founder of the dubious fraternity, could the Prophet have entered paradise (Meer Hassan Ali 1975: 375)!

The term *dam*, meaning 'breath', 'life' and 'spirit', is central to the ritual practice of the Madariyya sect. Breath control, or 'breath retention' (*ḥabs-i dam*) was always present in Sufis' psycho-technical exercises; *dhikr* is impossible without it. Al-Hujwiri quotes Bayazid Bistami, who had said: 'For gnostic (*'ārif*) faith is holding of breath' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 210). Founders of Sufi fraternities supposedly learnt the technique of *ḥabs-i dam* from the legendary Khizr. As for Madaris, they originated the doctrine according to which God was the spirit, Muhammad was the body, and the four righteous Caliphs were the hands and feet. In this 'organism', isomorphic to the world of Islam, Shah Madar was assigned the role of breath, and holding it, a dervish simultaneously retained in himself the presence of the saint as well as his very life.

It is not difficult to see in it a parallel to the teaching of the esoteric sect of Naths, whose ritual and psycho-technical actions were directed towards retaining *prāṇa* in one's body, understood both as a physiological act of breathing and as mystic vital energy, a direct analogy to the concept of *dam*. Like Naths, Madaris also strictly observed celibacy, since the outflow of semen came under the category of the same loss of vital energy. The same notions about isomorphism of the universe and the human body are typical for Naths as they are for Madaris. Finally, Naths, like the Madaris (who sometimes were called *be-qaid-o be-nawā*, i.e. 'without ties and worldly concern'), did not follow the conventional rituals of Hinduism, did not make offerings in temples and did not celebrate religious festivals. The Muslim mystics had been familiar with the teachings of the Naths since the earliest times, and scholars think that the term *jogī* (or yogi), which one comes across all the time in the Indian Sufi texts, applies precisely to Naths. Taking into consideration the fact that the Madariyya sect came into being fairly late and exclusively on Indian soil, it can be surmised that here the question is not of typological similarity, but of direct influence.[8]

The main event of Shah Madar's *'urs*, celebrated in the month of *Jumāda'l-awwal*, was the fire walking of the dervishes, accompanied by yells of *Dam Madār*. A shallow ditch was filled up with burning

ash and smouldering charcoal. To the beat of drums the dervishes stepped one after the other onto the fiery carpet. Brandishing cudgels over their heads, they slowly, dancing in time, moved along the ditch, invoking the saint. Participants of the ritual used to be in such a deep trance, that burning coal and ash did not cause them any serious burns. Perhaps because of these 'circus-like' performances of his disciples Shah Madar also became the patron saint of jugglers, acrobats and others who earned their keep by exhibiting tricks with monkeys, snakes and bears.

In spite of the horrible reputation of the Madaris their *dargāh* in Makanpur attracted thousands of pilgrims. The main reason for this was their reputation for curative magic: Shah Madar cured snakebites and scorpion stings and treated male impotency. Strict and pious Bada'uni confessed that having visited the tomb in Makanpur, he 'was captured in the net of desire and lust', however, according to his own testimony, he received 'chastisement for that sin even in this world' (Schimmel 1980: 136). Unlike any other *ziyārat* pilgrimage to Makanpur was not flaunted, since it presupposed in the man concerned a certain deficiency. It appears that veneration of Shah Madar was influenced by Hindu erotic cults to a greater extent than was devotion to Ghazi Miyan.

For this very reason women were strictly prohibited from entering the tomb, but even in their midst, behind the *parda*, legends were in circulation about Shah Madar's 'miracles' which supposedly gave a boost to male potency. Mrs Meer Hassan 'Ali, an English lady who left behind famous records of nineteenth-century Muslim India, visited Kanpur more than once and wrote about the reason for this prohibition:

> I have conversed with a remarkably devout person, on the numerous extraordinary stories related of Maadhaar's life, and the subsequent influence of his tomb. He told me that women can never, with safety to themselves, enter the mausoleum containing his ashes; they are immediately seized with violent pains as if their whole body was immersed in flames of fire. I spoke rather doubtingly on this subject, upon which he assured me that he had known instances of one or two women who had imprudently defied the danger, and intruded within the mausoleum, when their agony was extreme, and their sufferings for a long time protracted, although they eventually recovered.
>
> (Meer Hassan 'Ali 1975: 374)

In the same place Mrs Meer Hassan ʻAli retells the story about an English officer, who together with a group of his colleagues visited the fair, which took place annually during the saint's ʻ*urs* (troops of the East India Company were quartered in Kanpur). In spite of the persistent persuasion of the supervisors of the *dargāh* not to come near the tomb he came inside and fainted on the spot. Efforts of the attendants of the tomb and friends of the Englishman were of no avail. 'When able to speak, he declared himself to be on the eye of death and in a few short hours he breathed his last' (Meer Hassan ʻAli 1975: 375).

A decade earlier than Mrs Meer Hassan ʻAli the *dargāh* in Makanpur was visited by an English traveller, Viscount George Valentia, who has left an interesting description of the atmosphere reigning there:

> Mounting our elephants . . . we set off for the rowzah, or tomb. At the gate of the outer court we were received by a great number of the priests, and conducted through three courts to the shrine. In each of these were multitudes of Faquirs, roaring, dancing, and praying with the most frantic gestures. The drums and shrill trumpets, with large brass basons, beating with hollow sticks, added to the discordance of the noise. Even the walls were crowded, and we should have made our way with difficulty, had it not been for the exertions of our Faquirs, who, expecting a handsome present, repelled the crowd, and repressed with indignation the demands of some of the most superstitious, that we should take off our shoes . . . The tomb itself is placed in the centre of a square building, with four windows of fret work; through one of which is occasionally an opening. It is of the usual shape and size, and is covered with cloth of gold, with a canopy of the same over it, highly perfumed with attar of roses. We went the circuit, and looked in at each window; afterwards we visited the mosque, in front of which is a fountain, and two prodigious boilers, where a constant miracle is performed; for if unholy rice is put into them, they still continue empty: I had no time to see this executed, but it is a trick not very difficult to play . . . On reaching the tents, I found many of holy men in attendance, inasmuch as they were afraid of trusting each other, although each considered himself as perfect. I gave them two gold mohurs, about which they wrangled abundantly. At his particular

> request, I appointed the Faquir Kurimmuddien my Vakeel in the court of the holy saint Huzrut Syed Buddiudien Kotbal Muddar . . . At these fairs all the rascals in India are assembled; we therefore expected some attempt might be made to rob us, but the night passed off quietly.
>
> (Valentia 1811: 161–2)

In spite of all the ill fame and notoriety of the Madariyya sect, the outstanding spiritual services of its eponym were acknowledged both by contemporaries and posterity. Judging from *malfūẓāt Laṭā'if-i Ashrafī* (Stories of the Nobles) of Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, who was not only a saint, but also a serious Sufi author and theologian, he often journeyed all over the world in Shah Madar's company. However, the reference is most likely to a spiritual journey, which Sufis used to perform in the mystical state of *ṭair*. The authors of different collections, *ṭabaqāt al-awliyā*, write about Shah Madar with equal respect, particularly Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman Chishti in the monumental compendium *Mir'āt al-asrār* (Mirror of Secrets), to say nothing of *Mir'āt-i Madārī*, devoted specially to the saint. A curious fact of the recognition of Shah Madar's *baraka* was the visit to his tomb by the orthodox Emperor Aurangzeb, who was by no means favourably disposed to the cult of saints.

This chapter has considered four saints, who in their lifetime were warriors of Islam or carried out *jihād* against followers of other religions – and yet how little of their historical image and biographical circumstances has survived in their posthumous cult! In practice it turned out that the cult of the *shahīds* in India, as in the rest of Islamic world, was mainly confined to the Shi'a community, whereas the cult of *awliyā*, as is generally known, grew basically on Sunni soil, generously fertilized by Sufism. Violent or unnatural death could impart a halo of sainthood to a warrior killed in battle, an executed mutineer, or to a heroine of popular legend who died of love, but it does not mean that they were later venerated as martyrs. Death in tragic or mysterious circumstances was one of the many constituents of *baraka*, and there is no scarcity of various saints who peacefully died of old age in their beds, and yet became objects of such a passionate and fervent veneration, of which martyrs had not even dreamt.

I would say that between martyrdom and the cult of the saint in South Asia there exists an inverse relationship: the longer a saint lived, the more he was held in respect and revered by disciples and devotees during his lifetime, the more blissful and serene was his disposition on the one hand, the more actively he was venerated after

his death on the other hand. An example can be found in the cult of such persons as Mu'inuddin Sijzi, Baba Farid and Nizamuddin Awliya who all lived to a venerable age.

Relics of military honours can, in fact, be discerned only in Ghazi Miyan's cult, but even here nothing reminds one now of martyrdom particularly – the rites of mourning and lamentation, in which the Shi'a ritual is so rich, are altogether absent. Functions of curative magic (the cure of leprosy) and fertility (the conjugal aspect) come to the foreground. The cult of Shah Jalal and Pir Badr, on the whole, is divested of any connection with military and proselytizing activity; images of these Muslim *ghāzīs* have been identified with the legendary saint Khizr and the rituals of their veneration have accordingly made allowance for the popular worship of spirits and deities of sources of water. Shah Madar's life only indirectly bears a relation to propagation of faith by force of arms, but the Madariyya sect founded by him has astonishingly combined the militant expansionistic aspect of *futuwwa* with esoteric occultism.

In other words, the veneration of warrior saints once again confirms that there is no direct dependence between the personality of a saint, as depicted in historical and hagiographic literature, and the nature of his cult. As always, the practice of veneration of a saint's tomb was influenced mainly by the universal notions about *baraka*, utilitarian objects of *ziyārat* (curative magic, strengthening of fertility, etc.) and etiological legends of a given locality.

8

THE MENDICANT SAINTS

Till now the discourse has been chiefly about the saints belonging to the main *silsilas* and attached to particular *k͟hānqāhs*. Some of them, like Baba Farid, Nizamuddin Awliya and Shah Madar were throughout their life bound to one place, like veritable *muqīmān*. Others spent many years travelling, like Data Ganjbakhsh, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Sijzi or Shah Jalal and only in their declining years did they become 'settled'. The posthumous fame of the *awliyā* of both the categories and the cult of their tombs are closely connected with the places where they led the life of a hermit or preached in their lifetime, hence the abundance of local legends and toponymy, coming into being around one or another *mazār* or *dargāh* and in the aggregate making up a peculiar 'sacred' geography of the subcontinent. However, in South Asia there were quite a lot of saints and mystics who did not belong to any *ṭarīqa*, and who spent their entire life on the journey. The most common name for them was the word *qalandar* (literally 'a rough unshaped block or log').[1]

The term *qalandar* was historically applied to various categories of mystics. Up to the fourteenth century it was synonymous with the concept of dervish and denoted a wandering mystic-ascetic, who did not have personal property or a definite place of residence. In early mystic poetry *qalandar* is a wanderer who has renounced everything temporal and is absorbed only in love for God. The Persian Sufis of the eleventh century, Abu Sa'id Maihani, 'Abdullah Ansari and Baba Tahir 'Uryan, called themselves *qalandars* in precisely this sense. The last-mentioned said:

> I am mystic gypsy called Qalandar;
> I have neither fire, home, nor monastery.
> By day I wander about the world, and at night
> I sleep with a brick under my head.
>
> (Rizvi 1986: 301)

And, finally, the word *qalandar* denoted a member of the mystic-ascetic movement in Khurasan, which in the course of time took shape as the Qalandariyya fraternity and by the thirteenth century reached the borders of India. The teaching of Qalandariyya differed from the doctrines of other Muslim fraternities by virtue of the serious influence of Hindu and Buddhist practices on it. Its fundamental tenets were: the rejection of the mystic-ascetic practice of seclusion and life together in a cloister; an indifferent and negligent attitude towards the mandatory injunctions (*farā'iḍ*) and rituals of Islam; the avoidance of participation in common prayer and public worship; a refusal to observe the fast obligatory for all Muslims; subsistence by means of collecting alms; the absence of any property; and a nomadic way of life. Some members of the Qalandariyya fraternity also used to make a vow of celibacy.

The Qalandariyya movement came into being on the basis of the early teaching of Malamatiyya (from Arabic *malāmat*, 'blame'), to which al-Hujwiri has devoted a separate chapter of his *Kashf al-maḥjūb*. After giving an account of different kinds of *malāmat* incurred by the mystics of the past, al-Hujwiri wrote ironically of his contemporaries:

> In those days it was necessary, for incurring blame, to do something disapproved or extraordinary; but in our time, if anyone desires blame, he need only lengthen a little his voluntary prayers or fulfil the religious practices which are prescribed: at once everybody will call him a hypocrite and impostor.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 65)

The *malāmatī* used to assert that 'blame is abandonment of welfare' (*al-malāmat tark as-salāmat*) and in their aspiration for 'belittling themselves' and dissolving themselves in God intentionally attracted people's censure and contempt by their scandalous escapades.[2] In so doing they were guided by the *āyat*: 'They fear not the blame of anyone; that is the grace of God which He bestows on whomsoever He pleases; God is bounteous and wise' (5: 59).

Conscious of their own insignificance before God and in order to avoid the attention of others, the *malāmatīs* rejected everything superficial and ostentatious, including collective *dhikr* and *tarāwiḥ* (supererogatory prayers), which were widely practised amongst Sufis, their special dress and mode of life, because they considered that these manifestations of piety were meant for the public. However,

moderate mystics did not give too much credence to them, remembering that self-abasement was worse than pride. Al-Hujwiri, speaking of people who take refuge in the status of *malāmatī* after having committed an evil deed, comes to the conclusion:

> In my opinion, to seek Blame is mere ostentation, and ostentation is mere hypocrisy. The ostentatious man purposely acts in such way as to win popularity, while the Malāmatī purposely acts in such a way that the people reject him. Both have their thoughts fixed on mankind and do not pass beyond that sphere. The dervish, on the contrary, never even thinks of mankind.
>
> (al-Hujwiri 1992: 67)

Abu Hafs Suhrawardi in *'Awārif al-ma'ārif* makes a distinction between *malāmatī* and *qalandar*. The former, in his opinion, are truly sincere, but do not want outsiders to get to know about their ecstatic state and mystic experience. He regards the movement of *qalandars* as an anti-social phenomenon, considering that they consciously violate the injunctions of *sharī'at* and defy religion and society.

> The term *qalandariyya* is applied to people so possessed by the intoxication of 'tranquility of heart' that they respect no custom or usage and reject the regular observances of society and mutual relationship. Traversing the arenas of 'tranquility of heart' they concern themselves little with ritual prayer and fasting except such as are obligatory (*farā'iḍ*). Neither do they concern themselves with those earthly pleasures which are allowed by the indulgence of divine law . . . The difference between the *qalandarī* and the *malāmatī* is that the *malāmatī* strives to conceal his mode of life whilst the *qalandarī* seeks to destroy accepted custom.
>
> (Trimingham 1971: 267)

Indeed, *qalandars* in every way possible used to flaunt their special mystic status both in their outward appearance and in their conduct. They wore a short *khirqa* which came down only to their thighs, a shaggy fur-cap, a heavy iron necklace, ear-rings, looking like massive rings worn on the fingers, and wide bracelets, generally called '*qalandar's* implements' (*ālāt-i qalandarī*). Undoubtedly these 'implements' were a sign of humble resignation to God's will and of repentance, since they reminded one more of a slave's attributes than of a free person's ornaments.

Qalandars used to shave their heads and beards, sometimes leaving the moustache untouched. All-knowing Ibn Battuta explained the outward appearance of *qalandars* by an episode from the biography of Muhammad b. Yunus as-Sawaji (who died in 1232), the founder of the Qalandariyya fraternity.[3] A certain woman living in Sawa (Iran) enticed him into her house on a plausible pretext, and having failed to win his love, locked him up in the pantry. The ingenious *qalandar*, having been locked up, shaved his head and beard clean, not leaving even his eyebrows. When the temptress saw what her object of passion had turned into, she lost all interest in him and set him free. In gratitude for his deliverance from sin as-Sawaji retained this new appearance throughout his life and entrusted his followers never to part with a razor.

The Chishti *malfūẓāt* often refer to the shocking behaviour of the *qalandars*. *Qalandars* and those congenial souls the *juwāliqs* were inimically disposed to the 'settled ones'. They did not recognize their sainthood and considered them to have been secularized and 'turned into bourgeoisie'. However, at the same time they constantly visited *k͟hānqāhs* and had the brazenness to ask for gifts and money. The scandals which they in the process perpetrated – let us recall the breached wall in Baba Farid's *jamā'at k͟hāna* or the riot in Baha'uddin Zakariya's *k͟hānqāh* – can be only partly explained by the *qalandars'* 'programmatic' endeavour to incur censure. The gentle and patient Nizamuddin Awliya considered a visit by *qalandars* to be a peculiar penance or at least a sobering agent, which God granted to the *shaik͟hs*, so that they did not get too conceited in the atmosphere of general adoration:

> A *juwaliq* entered the room. And he began to utter some shameful remarks that are inappropriate for a saintly assembly. The master – may God remember him with favour – said nothing. In short, he lived up to the expectations that the *juwaliq* had on him. After that he turned to those present and emphasized: 'This is what has to be done (in such circumstances). Just as many persons come, place their head at my feet, and offer something, so there ought to be people like this who come and speak unabashedly. It is through such acts that the saint can offer penance for those other acts'.
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 136)

Qalandars did not confine themselves only to shameful words: in the year 1353 a wandering dervish called Turab, who was dissatisfied

with the reception accorded to him in the Delhi *khānqāh* of the Chishtis, inflicted with a dagger thirty wounds on the great Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli.[4] Earlier in the year 1290 a *qalandar* of the Hyderi sect[5] played a fatal role in the case of the conspirator Sidi Maula: when he appeared for trial in the court of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji, of an attempt on whose life he was accused, a Hyderi present in the courtroom slashed Sidi Maula's throat with a razor, which, as we will recall, *qalandars* always kept handy. At the same time Sidi Maula himself belonged to the sect of *muwallihs* related to the *qalandars*. Elephants trampled the dervish, who had been fatally wounded by a member of his own brotherhood.

A contemporary researcher of South Asian Sufism, Simon Digby, has called *qalandars* and similar sects of wandering dervishes with other self-appellations, deviants, that is groups deviating from social and religious conduct (Digby 1984). Moderate 'sober' mystics, let alone '*ulamā*, regarded *qalandars* and similar groups of dervishes as *zindīqs*. The testimony of Muhammad Gesudaraz in this respect is interesting:

> People keep on saying that *ḥaqīqat* is the divine secret, but I, Muhammad Husaini, say that *sharī'at* is the divine secret, because I have also heard talk of *ḥaqīqat* from the mouths of *muwallihs*, Haidaris, Qalandars, *mulḥids* and *zindīqs* (heretics of sorts); nay, I have even heard it from the mouths of Yogis, of Brahmans and of Gurus. But talk of the *sharī'at* I have not heard from the mouth of anyone other than the people of true faith and belief, i.e. Sunni Muslims. Thus it is evident that the *sharī'at* is the divine secret.
>
> (Schimmel 1980: 53)

This quotation proves that, first, such an authoritative Sufi as Gesudaraz did not differentiate between *qalandars*, *muwallihs*, *Hydaris* and other sects of wandering dervishes and, second, equated their irresponsible utterances with the words of *kāfirs* (Yogis and Brahmans). Gesudaraz's stand is all the more understandable, since the 'calculated deviation' of *qalandars* and their like was in the first place directed against the authority of the shaikhs of the main *silsilas* and against the deep-rooted methods of transmission of *baraka*.

The *qalandars* rejected both the basic forms and methods of Sufi practice and the established relations between *pīr* and *murīd*, which presupposed movement on the Path only under the leadership of a

spiritual preceptor. Generally speaking, the Muslim poetry of the subcontinent is full of scornful, even mocking remarks about hypocritical and hidebound shaikhs, ignorant of the true profundity of mystic enlightenment. Thus, one of the pioneers of poetic tradition in *rekhta* Urdu, Muhammad Wali (1668–1707), in many respects reflects the point of view of *malāmatīs* or *qalandars*, when he says:

Shaikh yahāñ bāt terī pesh na jāyegī kabhū
Zuhd kī choṛ ke mat majlis-i rindān meñ ā
Shaikh! Nothing you say will ever have any effect here.
Abandon your counsels of asceticism and come and join
the company of pleasure-seekers.
(Matthews and Shackle 1972: 24–5)

True, attacks on shaikhs pretty early on turn into a stable semantic motif of the genre *ghazal* and lose any connection with critical sentiments in Sufi circles. That is why when Mir Taqi Mir depicts the image of an impudent shaikh in a highly intoxicated state distributing the attributes of his affiliation to the fraternity amongst fellow revellers and boon companions, he is only paying homage to the convention of the genre:

Shaikh jo hai masjid meñ nangā, rāt ko thā meikhāne meñ
Jubba, khirqa, kurtā, t'opī mastī meñ in'ām kiyā
The Shaikh, who is naked in the mosque, was in the wine-
tavern last night.
In his drunkenness he pledged his coat, his patched cloak,
his shirt, and his hat.
(Matthews and Shackle 1972: 62–3)

Denying the role of living spiritual preceptors, *qalandars* at times declared themselves to be *murīds* of already dead shaikhs and took the oath of loyalty (*bai'a*) at their graves, which called forth condemnation and resistance on the part of the heads of *silsilas*. Thus, one of Shakh Farid's sons, fancying himself to be a *qalandar*, shaved his head and took the oath at Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's tomb, after which he proclaimed himself to be a disciple of this saint. Shaikh Farid was indignant at such a violation of the laws of initiation and declared: 'Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din is my spiritual guide and master, but this form of initiation is not proper. Initiation and discipleship means that one should grasp the hand of a Shaikh [i.e. is in direct contact with him – A. S.]' (Nizami 1955: 95).

Qalandars did not recognize *khilāfat-nāmas* and *walāyat* – the limits of a saints' spiritual jurisdiction – which accounts for their hostile onslaughts on *khānqāhs*. Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, notable for his bellicose disposition, once tied up hand and foot and imprisoned a wandering *qalandar*, who had taken it into his head to cure people of diseases and work wonders in his *walāyat* in the region of Lakhnauti. Complaints to the effect that *juwāliqs* lived by begging and deceiving people in the regions around Delhi which were 'under his rule' are to be found even in Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli's *malfūẓāt*. At the same time *juwāliqs* did acknowledge some authority, if one may give credence to the story of how they prostrated themselves before Shaikh Baha'uddin Zakariya on hearing Abu Hafs 'Umar Suhrawardi's name.

Baha'uddin Zakariya, being, in principle, an opponent of wandering dervishes, could not deny that amongst them also one could come across quite pious and mystically gifted people. Thus, he came across a *juwāliq* who could in the course of two cycles of prayer recite the entire Qur'an. However much the Spiritual Sovereign of Multan wished to emulate this, he did not succeed and was compelled to declare: 'Now have I witnessed the truth of this axiom that in the midst of every group of people there is indeed one of God's elect!' (Amir Hasan 1992: 85).

Not liking the *qalandars* as a particular social group, Baha'uddin Zakariya nevertheless found his chosen ones amongst them. His favourite disciple Fakhruddin 'Iraqi lived the life of a typical *malāmatī* and the shaikh of Multan initiated another of his favourites, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (1177–1267), into the Suhrawardiyya order and gave him his own *khirqa*. May be Baha'ddin Zakariya's contradictory attitude towards *qalandars* is explained by the fact that amongst them there were a number of gifted poets, and the head of the Suhrawardiyya had always had a weakness for poetry.

The earliest *qalandars* found their way to the subcontinent from Khurasan. Having pretty well got on the nerves of Baba Farid, Baha'ddin Zakariya and the other saints of Punjab, they moved towards Delhi and Bengal, perpetrating scandals in each *khānqāh* which they came across on the way. From Gorakhattri, a small town in the neighbourhood of Peshawar, where there was the 'trans-shipping point' of wandering ascetics of various persuasions, they used to make their way along the main highway of the subcontinent extending over one and a half thousand miles, which connected the north-western regions with the capital of the Sultanate. Under the Mughals the highway was called the Imperial Road, whereas under

the English it was given the name of the Grand Trunk Road, which later Kipling would call the ‘backbone of the entire Hind’ and the ‘river of life, having no equal in the whole world’.

Along this very ‘river of life’ there came to the capital of the Delhi Sultanate Shah Khizr Rumi, with whom begins the story of the Qalandariyya fraternity in South Asia. A native of Anatoliya, Shah Khizr Rumi was a disciple of the semi-legendary long-lived saint ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Makki, whom *qalandars* traditionally regard as a contemporary and associate of the Prophet. Finding himself in Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish, Khizr Rumi came under the charm of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and took initiation into the Chishtiyya fraternity from him. The great shaikh permitted him to wear the clothes and observe the customs of the *qalandars*, insisting only that he should refrain from performing ‘unclean’ miracles. In that way we find Khizr Rumi at the source of the new derivative fraternity of Qalandariyya-Chishtiyya, which was especially popular in Jaunpur and other eastern regions of present Uttar Pradesh. Later on, the Jaunpuri branch of Qalandariyya-Chishtiyya became Shi‘a. The fourth successor of Khizr Rumi, namely Qutbuddin b. Sarandaz Jaunpuri (who died in 1518), instituted the *dhikr* formulae of the order: ‘Ya Hasan is forced between the two thighs, Ya Husain on the navel, Ya Fatima on the right shoulder, Ya ‘Ali on the left shoulder, and Ya Muhammad in his soul’ (Trimingham 1971: 268).

The most widely-known representative of this fraternity is another disciple of Khizr Rumi called Sharafuddin Bu ‘Ali Qalandar (who died in 1324), whose tomb in Panipat became a place of mass pilgrimage. Bu ‘Ali Qalandar became a very authoritative figure in later Sufi tradition when some authors of the sixteenth century, among them Sayyid Murtaza of Murshidabad, the compiler of *Yoga Qalandar*, traced the Qalandariyya discipline back to Bu ‘Ali of Panipat. As a true *qalandar*, Bu ‘Ali did not observe the injunctions of *sharī‘at*, and lived a life devoted to ascetic practices and mortification of the flesh. Wandering throughout the Islamic world, he spent some time in Konya where, according to information in *Akhbār al-akhyār*, he became acquainted with Jalaludddin Rumi’s son Sultan Weled, the head of the Mawlawi *ṭarīqa* founded by his father. In any case the verses (a few doctrinal poems and a *dīwān*), ascribed to Bu ‘Ali Qalandar, display a knowledge of *Mathnawī* and of Rumi’s lyrical poetry.

Besides verses Bu ‘Ali, like many other Sufis, used to elaborate upon his mystic experience in letters (*maktūbāt*). In one of them he wrote:

> Recognition of Beauty is a step leading to the understanding of the Beloved. This made the lover and the Beloved identical. Beloveds were created in the form of human beings in order that they might lead people to the righteous path. Both heaven and hell were born of the beauty of the Lover and none of these were meant for any one but lovers. Heaven was the stage of union; hell was the station of separation and was intended for enemies.
>
> (Rizvi 1986: 305)

Even from this short passage it is obvious how vulnerable Bu ‘Ali Qalandar was to the imputation of *zandaqa*. By asserting that the Beloved (i.e. God) may be personified in a human being, he verges on *ḥulūl*, which from the point of view of normative Islam, is a heretical concept of personification of the Divine (i.e. eternal) in something mortal and ‘transient’. *Ḥulūl* together with *ittiḥād* (union with God) was the most common accusation on the part of the Muslim theologians against Sufis in general and in particular against Mansur Hallaj, although in his discourses and works he avoided this term. The Chishti mystic Mas‘ud Bakk was pronounced guilty of *ḥulūl* and executed in 1387; even kinship with Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq could not save him from death. That is why ‘moderate’ Sufi authors (for example al-Hujwiri, Muhammad Gesudaraz and Ashraf Jahangir Simnani) criticized this dangerous concept in every way possible.

Gradually the main fraternities absorbed *qalandars*. Thus, for example, Hamid Qalandar, compiler of the *malfūẓāt Khair ul-majālis* was already a typical Chishti mystic, who had spent the greater part of his life in Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli’s *khānqāh*. The head of the Surkh-Bukhari fraternity, as we will recall, was one of the most widely-known wandering dervishes – Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahangasht from Ucch. Although he himself can in no way be reckoned among *qalandars* on account of the conservation and Puritanism of his views, the Jalaliyya sect of his followers which is under discussion is quite in line with groups of deviant dervishes.

The Suhrawardis’ connection with *qalandars* can be traced back to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, the patron saint of Sehwan, whose tomb is one of the most fascinating sanctuaries of the subcontinent. The real name of this wandering poet, dancer and musician was Mir Sayyid ‘Uthman. According to the legend he always dressed himself in red (as did Jalaluddin Surkhposh Bukhari) and hence his nickname *Lāl* (Red). Baha’uddin Zakariya supposedly gave the other part of the nickname *Shāhbāz* – royal falcon – to him at the time of his initiation.

During his lifetime Lal Shahbaz Qalandar had quite a shady reputation: Barani mentions how once he presented himself at the court of the governor of Multan intoxicated with hashish and surrounded by *bē-shar‘* dervishes, who committed such outrages that they were unceremoniously thrown out.

In the legends of popular Islam, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is depicted as an infernal dancer, in flowing scarlet clothes dancing on burning coals, surrounded by tongues of flame. I have already mentioned that the *dargāh* in Sehwan came into being at the place of a Shivaist sanctuary. In such instances, as the example of Bahraich shows, some functions and attributes of pre-Islamic objects of worship were imparted to the Muslim saints. It is likely that Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's macabre dance (*raqṣ*) was a replica of Shiva's cosmic dance *tāṇd'ava*. It is possible that the cult image of the wandering ascetic took shape under the influence of Shiva *Nāṭarāja*, the many-handed sovereign of dance, dancing in a fiery circle.

There are verses and hymns in Persian ascribed to Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. The key image of his poetry is the dance of death, the convulsions of a person hanged on the gallows (*dār*) who is a martyr of Divine love. This image is borrowed from the Sindhi folk poetry of the genre *ḥallājiya*, which came into being under the influence of Mansur Hallaj's visit to Sindh in the year 905. The dervishes, nowadays performing ritual dances, or *dhammal*, in the Sehwan *dargāh*, by the convulsive jerks of their bodies and typical quick movements of their feet, as if they are hardly touching the ground, reproduce both the writhing of the hanged and the gait of those walking on fire.

In general, a visit to Sehwan makes a most powerful impression on a foreigner: inside the *dargāh* reigns a particularly tense, even hysterical, atmosphere, which is added to by saturated with the suffocating odour of *bhāñg* (Indian hemp). The tomb itself, built in 1357 by Firoz Shah Tughluq, is of little interest as far as its architecture is concerned. Apart from that it is difficult to have a close look at it, hidden as it is behind compact rows of stalls and annexes. It was continually in the process of being completed and today it represents a tangled labyrinth of inner courtyards, passages and galleries. One can reach the central courtyard, where the *dhammal* dance is performed, only through the 'new' southern gate, built by Zulfiqar 'Ali Bhutto. However, going back through it is for some reason not possible. One has to make a fairly long detour, cross the main courtyard and a connected series of small courtyards and pass through large gilded doors, donated by the last Shah of Iran.

The 'old' eastern entrance, adorned with dark blue and white tiles and two flanking minarets, leads to the tomb proper. Inside the tomb lamps are placed on high consoles, from which burning hot oil falls in drops into special vessels. The pilgrims, taking the risk of being scalded, dip their fingers in it and smear it on their forehead and lips. The origin of this ritual is connected with the fact that in his lifetime the saint, consumed by the flame of divine love, literally used to drink boiling sesame oil and pour it on his chest. Under the canopy of the cenotaph a big stone is suspended, which seems to be quite heavy and which the saint used to carry on his chest during his lifetime.[6] Going round the *mazār*, the faithful reverentially touch this stone with their hand.

At six thirty in the evening the thunder of the big drums heralds the commencement of the daily *dhammal*. On weekdays the dervishes and pilgrims dance for only half an hour, apart from on Thursdays when they dance for a whole hour. Men and women sit down on different sides of the courtyard; for the time being they interchange remarks, but in only a few minutes they will be in the grip of wild excitement, turning into a somnambulistic trance. At first the dervishes come to the centre of the courtyard. From time to time they jump high, bending their legs in the air at the knees, while performing *lezginka* (a lively Caucasian folk dance). They touch down not flat on the whole foot, but on their toes, and then till the next jump they jig at a fast tempo, as if performing a toe dance, with the only difference being that they are barefoot.

The heads and hands of the dancers twitch abruptly in time with the quickening roll of the drums; faces are distorted with the grimace of ecstasy. Gradually the pilgrims sitting around join the dancing dervishes. Men get up and clumsily jump, mark time and go into a spin; often amongst them *hījṛas* (transvestites) are to be seen who move with affectedly dainty steps. Women, on their knees, rotate their heads in a state of frenzy, and their long, loose, flowing hair cuts the air with a whistling sound. Some of them fall into a deep trance and sit slumped on the ground in a catatonic stupor.

Everywhere one can see crooked hands and legs, mouths wide open, eyes coming out of their sockets, like a living visual aid for a psychiatrist learning his trade. However, with the stroke of the gong this entire frightening dance of death abruptly comes to an end. First to leave are the dervishes, the instigators, and then the pilgrims also collect their belongings, disperse and go home. The woman who was just now rolling on the ground, having gone mad in ecstasy, tucks her hair under her black *chaddar* in a business-like manner, wraps herself

up in a shawl, takes her child in her arms and goes home with modest dignity.

The industry of pilgrimage in Sehwan-i Sharif is organized on a large scale: following in the saint's footsteps, one has to make payment at each step. Entry to the grotto, where Lal Shahbaz used to meditate, costs ten rupees in all. It costs slightly more to crawl under the felled *khabar* tree, by the side of which he used to pray in his lifetime, and in the process be cured of all diseases. On separate payment one is allowed to collect medicinal water from the spring where the saint in his time used to drink, and so on and so forth. At the same time the *dargāh* every day receives one and a half thousand pilgrims and feeds them free of cost, whereas at the time of ʻ*urs*, celebrated on the 18–20 of *Shaʻbān*, the number of visitors reaches twenty-five thousand, whose reception requires considerable resources.

Dances on burning coals, walking through fire and other ordeals, accompanied by mutilation, made up the rituals, common for many deviant groups. In the preceding chapter it was mentioned how the followers of Zinda Shah Madar used to perform this rite. Another sect of fiery dancers were the wandering Hyderi dervishes, whose eponym was yet another disciple of Muhammad b. Yunus as-Sawaji, Qutbuddin Hyder from Nishapur (died 1221). Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya highly praised him as a person who had possessed great spiritual powers and clairvoyance: according to him Qutbuddin Hyder predicted the victory of the Mongols over India.[7] As it is told in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*:

> in that spiritual state he could pick up burning hot iron, and shape it around his neck into a necklace or around his hand into a bracelet; the iron in his hand became like wax. The Hyderis still exist, and their members still wear such necklaces and bracelets, but where is that spiritual state (which the founder possessed)?
>
> (Amir Hasan 1992: 100–1)

The Hyderis not only continued to wear these iron accessories, but even used to pass round iron rods through their male organs and because both ends were sealed called them 'rods of the seal' (*sikh-i muhr*) of celibacy. Ibn Battuta who often met Hyderis in his travels wrote that they 'place iron rings in their hands, necks and ears, and even their male members so that they are unable to indulge in sexual intercourse' (*The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1962: 279–80). It is quite

possible that the Hyderis borrowed this custom from the Hindu *Nāgā sanyāsīs* (Rizvi 1986: 307). From a sect of Indian ascetics *Kānphat'ā* (a variety of Nath Yogis) they had learnt to make incisions in ears at the time of initiation, inserting heavy iron rings in them. Ibn Battuta described in details one of his meetings with Hyderis near Amroha in 1342:

> There came to me a company of poor brethren who had iron rings on their necks and arms, and whose chief was a coal-black negro. They belonged to the corporation known as the Haidariya and they spent one night with us. Their chief asked me to supply him with firewood that they might light it for their dance, so I charged the governor of that district, who was 'Aziz known as al-Khammar to furnish it. He sent about ten loads of it, and after the night prayer they kindled it, and at length, when it was a mass of glowing coals, they began their musical recital and went into that fire, still dancing and rolling about in it. Their chief asked me for a shirt and I gave him one of the finest texture; he put it on and began to roll about in the fire with it on and to beat the fire with the sleeves until it was extinguished and dead. He then brought me the shirt showing not a single trace of burning on it, at which I was greatly astonished.
>
> (*The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1962, 2: 274–75)

Although many modern researchers tend to perceive the predominant influence of the Indian substratum in the practice of Hyderis and other deviant groups, Ibn Battuta saw in it a similarity with the rituals of the Rifa'iyya dervishes active in Egypt, Iraq and Syria, in the region between Basra and Wasit, i.e. in the cradle of the Arab Sufism. Ibn Battuta often used to stay in the cloisters of Rifa'is – he called them *Aḥmadī* by the name of the fraternity's eponym Ahmad b. 'Ali ar-Rifa'i (1106–82) – and knew their rituals well. So Ibn Battuta wrote about Rifa'i dervishes in Wasit:

> They had prepared loads of fire-wood which they kindled into a flame and went into the midst of it dancing; some of them rolled in the fire, and others ate it in their mouths, until finally they extinguished it entirely. This is their regular custom and it is a peculiar characteristic of their corporation of Ahmadi brethren. Some of them will take a large snake

> and bite its head with their teeth until they bite it clean through.
>
> (*The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1962, 2: 274)

Ibn Battuta's last phrase reminds one of the customs of the Jalaliyya fraternity, whose members, as we remember, also swallowed snakes and scorpions.

The most widely known of the South Asian Hyderis was Shaikh Abu Bakr Tusi Qalandari, who in the middle of the thirteenth century founded a *k͟hānqāh* on the banks of the Jamna in the suburb of Delhi. Even from his name it is clear that in India Hyderis were finally absorbed in the *qalandarī* trend. According to Amir Khurd, Abu Bakr Tusi was held in respect by the Delhi mystics and used to visit Sultan Balban's court. *Samāʿ* were often held in his cloister, which were at times attended by Nizamuddin Awliya and Jamaluddin Hansawi. The latter gave Abu Bakr Tusi the nickname *Bāz-i Safīd* (White Falcon), as if by contrast with the Red Falcon, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. It turns out that the great Shaikhs of both the main fraternities had their own chosen 'falcons' amongst the deviant dervishes.

However, warm relationships with meek Chishti *shaik͟hs* did not exert an ennobling influence upon Abu Bakr Tusi: his relations with other contemporaries were not so cordial. He was rather harsh with his neighbour Nuruddin Malik Yar Parran who planned to build a *k͟hānqāh* near Abu Bakr's; he took an active part in the conflict between the sons of Jalaluddin Khalji, supporting one royal prince Arkali Khan against his rival Khan-i Khanan. But those who really disgraced Abu Bakr Tusi were his disciples, rioters and trouble-makers representing the most aggressive detachment of wandering dervishes, with an extremist frame of mind. It was one of Abu Bakr Tusi's *murīds*, and that too on his instigation, who attacked Sidi Maula with a razor before sentence had been passed upon him.[8] In the *k͟hānqāh* of the Hyderiyya refuge was given to thieves and murderers hiding from punishment; bringing this to an end was the official reason for the persecution of the sect and its leader during the reign of the stickler for law 'Ala'uddin Khalji.

After Abu Bakr Tusi's death Hyderi dervishes no longer had a centralized leadership or their own cloister. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq, favourably disposed only to the '*ulamā* and moderate 'sober' Sufis who had facilitated his accession to power, banished deviant groups of dervishes from the capital, and wandering mystics had to find refuge in the Sharqi Sultanate and in Muslim Bengal, where the traditions of religious syncretism and programmatic tolerance were deep-rooted.

However, with the ascension of the Afghan clan of Lodi to the throne of Delhi in 1451 fortune once again smiled upon *qalandars*, and they became welcome guests at the court. This is accounted for by the true prediction of an unknown *qalandar* who presented himself in Sikandar Lodi's camp and foretold that he would gain victory over the Sultan of Jaunpur. Since then many rulers of India have been favourably disposed to the presence of *qalandars* in their vicinity.[9]

Even the 'settled' *muqīmān* Sufis, in spite of their strained relations with *qalandars*, sided with them when they faced danger from the authorities. Thus in the beginning of the fifteenth century the well-known Chishti mystic from Rudauli, Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdul Haqq (died 1434), stood up for the reputation of *qalandars* and other wandering dervishes, whom the Sultan of Bengal Ghiyathuddin A'zam Shah had decided to banish from his capital, Pandua. This action also had the purpose of getting rid of an excess of 'religious migrants'. Since 1398–9, when Timur's troops had devastated Punjab and the region of Delhi, thousands of wandering ascetics and mystics had moved over to Bengal. In order to evict 'God's own people', however, some pretext had to be found, and the Shah found it, accusing *qalandars* of unseemly behaviour and comparing them with Hindu jogis:

> One night the king visited a camp of *qalandars* disguised as a beggar. They were just about to start eating and rudely ordered him to leave. Then the king visited the camp of yogis. They were also taking food together and gave him an equal share. To his question why had they fed a mere stranger they replied that this was in accordance with their custom of sharing all food equally, even with dogs. Next morning the king ordered the Muslim mystics to leave Pandua. All were arrested and escorted to boats, which took them to exile. This action led to great unrest in the town. So Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdu'l-Haqq, accompanied by a dervish (*majdhūb*) friend went to the palace to test the king's reaction to their presence. They remained unnoticed for quite some time, then left, returning to the house of their host. The Shaikh declared that the king did not expel dervishes and *qalandars*, only ignorant mystics.
>
> (Rizvi 1986: 270–1)

Although the version set forth by 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi in his *Anwār al-'Uyūn* is quite improbable because it is doubtful whether

yogis (or *jogis*), by which name, as we will recall, Naths were usually referred to, would have so willingly shared food with a Muslim *faqīr*, the yearning of Shaikh Ahmad 'Abdul Haqq to whitewash his wandering fellow-*qalandars* and lay the blame on anonymous 'ignorant' charlatans is obvious.

Many 'respectable' mystics often travelled in the guise of an indigent *qalandar*, whose status partly protected the wayfarer from the hazards of the highway. Thus in the year 1492 Jamali Kanboh, being by then a famed poet, visited the great 'Abdur Rahman Jami in Herat. The later *tadhkira*, *Afsāna-i Shāhān* by Muhammad Kabir b. Shah Isma'il relates that Jamali was dressed as a wandering ascetic, his head was shaved, his body was smeared with ashes and begirt with a donkey's skin around the waist. Jami, who at first took the visitor for an ordinary cadging *qalandar*, decided to mock at his appearance and rather impolitely asked what the difference was between him, i.e. Jamali, and a donkey. The guest also replied with a joke that the difference was in the skin, because the donkey wore it all its life and the *qalandar* in order to sit on it. Then Jamali, bearing in mind that the guise of a *qalandar* conceals the piety and intensity of mystic experience, recited his celebrated line: 'The dust of thy lane has settled on my body like a garment' ('*Marā zi khāk-i kūyat pīrāhan ast bar tan*'). Here Jami at last understood that his visitor was Jamali himself, and treated him with great respect, asking him to explain some Hindi words in the verses of Amir Khusrow and Amir Hasan.

Although 'Abdullah Ansari asserted in the treatise 'The Book of Qalandar' (*Qalandar-nāma*) that wandering mystics are endowed with great virtues: modesty, meekness, self-abnegation and unselfishness, popular hagiographic literature always warned neophytes and mystics against the difficulties and hazards lying in wait for the dervish who chose the *qalandarī* mode of life. Hence, probably, the image of the handsome *qalandar* tempting the Sufi and enticing him away on futile wanderings appeared behind him, an image which is widespread in medieval *ṭabaqāt al-awliyā* and *tadhkiras*.

Meeting with this sort of tempter-*qalandar* had all of a sudden changed Fakhruddin 'Iraqi's fate. He left the *madrasa* in Hamadan, where he was teaching recitation of the Qur'an, and having arrayed himself in the rags of a wandering dervish and shaved his head clean, he followed a handsome young man to Khurasan, and from there to Multan. When the group of *qalandars* which 'Iraqi had joined was about to move further, a sandstorm started raging, in which the wanderers lost each other. The handsome *qalandar* mysteriously disappeared and nothing else was left for Fakhruddin 'Iraqi, but to

linger on in Multan for an indefinite period of time. Here he was given refuge and shown much kindness by Baha'uddin Zakariya, under whose influence, which was as powerful as any storm, 'Iraqi managed to forget the fatal *qalandar*, or rather, to sublimate earthly passion for him into the 'true' transcendental love with which his poetry is imbued. Later the Spiritual Sovereign of Multan gave one of his daughters in marriage to the poet and made up his mind that he had once and for all settled down. However, as we have already seen, after the Shaikh's death 'Iraqi once again set off on his wanderings.

The romantic theme connected with the image of the wandering dervish resounds in the life of Shah Husain, generally known as Madho Lal Husain (1539–93). He is one of the major patron saints of Lahore and his modest tomb on the territory of the Mughal park of Shalimar became the place where the popular festival *Melā-i chirāghān* (Fair of lights), coinciding with the '*urs*, is held every year. This talented poet, dancer and musician, who was the first to make use of the subjects and artistic devices of Punjabi folklore in spiritual lyric poetry, cannot be reckoned among the *qalandars*, as he was formally initiated into the Qadiriyya fraternity (like the overwhelming majority of mystic poets of the north-western part of the subcontinent). However, in his habits and tenor of life he differed little from *qalandars*: he dressed in red rags, as did his predecessor Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, and in the course of many years he wandered about the streets of the town, living by begging, dancing, singing his verses, and by night finding shelter in *Dātā Darbār*.

Shah Husain belonged to the caste of Punjabi weavers who converted to Islam relatively later, in Firoz Shah's times. His educator and spiritual preceptor was the Qadiri mystic Shaikh Bahlul Darya'i. Possibly Husain would have become a respectable Shaikh, had he not met a Hindu youth called Madho, the offspring of a Brahman family, residing in the Shahdara locality. At that time Husain was already an elderly person – in his verses he complains that his face is wrinkled and his teeth have darkened:

> Shah Hussain, you are so old,
> With wrinkles e'n in your teeth,
> And yet you are in search,
> Of those, at close of day,
> Who went ahead at morn.
> (Fakhar Zaman 1995: 80; translated
> by Ghulam Yaqoob Anwar)

However, he went mad with passion for the young man. As if the hero of a romantic *mathnawī*, in the daytime Husain followed on Madho's heels and at night wandered near his house. Madho, like the heroine of the same genre, in the course of several years ignored his ardent admirer. Since adherence to different religions prevented companionship with Madho, Husain, wishing to see the beloved more often, participated in Hindu festivals *holī* and *basant*, sang the Hindu devotional hymns (*bhajans*), and wore the clothes of a *sādhū*, thereby showing how porous was the dividing line between a vagrant Hindu ascetic and a wandering dervish. Finally, having experienced *fanā*, he transformed his personality, merging himself totally in his beloved, and, having combined his name with his own, started calling himself Madho Lal Husain.

In the tradition of the great mystics like Jalaladdin Rumi and Fakhruddin 'Iraqi the boy's beauty was a witness (*shahīd*) of the Divine Beauty and the 'worldly love' toward a handsome youth was 'a pedagogical experience, a training in obedience toward God, since the human beloved, like God, has to be obeyed absolutely' (Schimmel 1975: 291). It is clear that Shah Husain learnt the lesson of dissolving his self in the self of Madho as a prelude to his final annihilation in the Absolute.

The *kāfīs*, in which the suffering Shah Husain, speaking on behalf of Hir, the heroine of Punjabi folk legends, pined in separation from the handsome youth Ranjha, were sung everywhere on the streets of Lahore:

> Let me be called, by each,
> By the name of 'Ranjah', dear
> And none address me as 'Heer'.
> I have become the 'Ranjah',
> By calling so oft on Him.
> (Fakhar Zaman 1995: 70)

Madho, on recognizing himself in the image of Ranjha, at last condescended to pay attention to his adorer, and then even shared his passion. As to how this love affair proceeded and how the people in the vicinity reacted to it can be judged from a passage from the Persian poem by Shaikh Mahmud of Lahore 'True Essence of Faqirs' (*Ḥaqīqat al-fuqarā*, 1662), which is an account of Shah Husain's life in verse:

> *Qaum-e ū shud pas az do sāl āgāh*
> *k-īn pisar az ḥusain shud be-rāh*

Ki chu pesh-e ḥusain bishtābad
shab dar āghosh-e ū hamīkhwābad
Ham may-e nāb mīkhwarad ba-ḥusain
'āshiqāna basar barad ba-ḥusain
Pas badīn sīrat-o badān sānash
chi 'ajab gar kunad musalmānash . . .
His kin in two years saw the truth –
Husain had quite misled the youth
E'er to Husain he'd swiftly race
To spend the night in his embrace,
With him he'd even drink pure wine
And as his lover spend the time –
This way of life must surely lead
Him to embrace the Muslim creed.
(Shackle 2000: 55–73)

Indeed the culmination of this amorous relationship between Shah Husain and Madho was conversion of the latter to Islam and this fact transformed the heroes' deviant behaviour (the homosexual relations and drinking of wine) into a manifestation of 'true love':

Hama-rā tark dāda dar pay-e ū
gasht mast-e muḥabbat az may-e ū
Ba-ṭufail-e ḥusain shud dīndār
badar āmad zi zumra-e kuffār
For him all things aside he laid
On his love was he drunken made,
Joining the faithful through Husain
With infidels not to remain.
(Shackle 2000: 55–73)

A Muslim's love for a Hindu girl and her conversion to Islam, symbolizing the annulment of the 'Turk–Hindu' opposition, is the main theme of a large corpus of Indo-Muslim texts, the so-called 'ballad-like' *mathnawī*, or poems about the mystery of love, which were analysed extensively in my book (Suvorova 2000: 29–43). These poems in Persian and Urdu had an obvious proselytizing orientation and in the descriptions of obstacles in the path of the Muslim hero and the Hindu heroine, of which the most insurmountable was the opposition of the social environment represented by the girl's relatives, they 'codified' the social and psychological trials faced by a missionary Sufi and a neophyte. Shaikh Mahmud's poem is unique

not because it exhibits on the stage the same story with scenery of homosexual love, but rather because it organizes in accordance with the laws of classical literary genre the life of a popular saint, who was in addition a historic personality.

Proselytizing poems always concluded with the tragic death or suicide of the heroes and their union after death. Shah Husain's story, however, has a happy end: he lived many years with his friend and passed away in his arms. After the saint's demise Madho became the *makhdūm* of his tomb and continued to compose songs under the poetic pseudonym of his lover so that Madho Lal Husain's *kāfīs* available now are the fruit of collective creative work of two 'lamps' (*chirāghān*) illuminating Lahore. Madho (who died in 1646) was buried by Shah Husain's side. At the close of the eighteenth century the Maharaja of Punjab, Ranjit Singh's wife, erected over the grave of the saints a mausoleum together with a small mosque. Madho Lal Husain's '*urs* is observed in February–March and coincides with the celebration of *Holī*. The rituals of *melā-i chirāghān* have retained many features of this Indian festival of the vernal equinox: jumping through fire, playful bouts between men and women, and the sprinkling of participants with coloured powder. The unorthodoxy and syncretism of Madho Lal Husain's cult have turned him into a beloved character of folklore, whom latter-day tradition ascribed opposition to the rule of the Mughals and struggle for establishment of an independent state of Punjab. As an anti-authoritarian hero he became a character of the plays of some contemporary Pakistani playwrights.

At the same time Madho Lal Husain's life, and the poem *Ḥaqīqat al-fuqarā* devoted to him, demonstrate that the shockingly scandalous behaviour of wandering dervishes served as a screen to conceal the 'true essence' (*ḥaqīqat*), and was capable of showing a heathen like Madho the way to God and of inspiring the heart of a sinner like Shah Husain with the emotional and passionate experience of faith. The unending road on which *qalandars* made their way, turned out to be the Path of Love, leading to that very goal, just like the *ṭarīqat* of 'regular' mystics. All-absorbing passion for the Divine Beloved, referred to by Madho Lal Husain, was, of course, not a privilege of those who were part of a *silsila* and lived in a *khānqāh*:

Rabba mere hal da mahram ton
Andar ton in bahar ton in rom rom vich ton
Inside is He,
And outside also He,

In every hair of mine;
So intimate is He,
With this condition fine.
(Fakhar Zaman 1995: 91)

The ambivalent image of the wandering saint, that of an impudent ragamuffin and an enigmatic handsome man, a *bē-shar'* scandalizing society and an ecstatic visionary, is one of the least studied in the corpus of South Asian *awliyā*. The *qalandars* and related groups of dervishes are personages of popular religion of the lower strata of the society and that is why their veneration is rooted in popular magical cults, which have undergone only superficial Islamization. Possibly, in the conflicts of *qalandars* with 'settled' saints, upon which the hagiographic literature is never tired of dilating, one can discern the echo of the resistance offered by the essentially syncretic popular religion to the expansion of 'pure' normative Islam.

EPILOGUE

As I have tried to show in this book, in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh there exists a valid living Islamic tradition which far from being hostile to non-Muslims unifies compatriots of other faiths, Hindus and Sikhs, in popular religious forms rather similar to those of Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians.

This tradition is the cult of the veneration of Muslim saints and their tombs, which involves millions of believers and not just Muslims alone. The cult of saints dating back to the medieval period demonstrates remarkable stability with no less remarkable adaptability to historical changes, social cataclysms and the new geopolitical realities. Successfully surviving all the political tribulations of the last few decades, it stands as a living testimony to the once composite culture of the subcontinent still uniting its inhabitants over ethnic, religious and state barriers.

The present flare-up of tensions between India and Pakistan, the unending tug-of-war over the 'division' of cultural heritage, heated debates on the definition of national identity on the religious issue make this subject highly important and topical. The cult of the Muslim saint is at least one flourishing institution of South Asian society where people of different creeds not only coexist peacefully, but collaborate actively. The cult of the Muslim saints in South Asia is not only a historical and cultural component, or an element of popular religion, but rather a universal and all-pervading phenomenon embracing the life of the subcontinent in all its aspects, including politics, social and family life, interpersonal relations, gender problems and national psyche.

It is as if the densely populated world of South Asian *awliyā*, crowded with relatives and those related by marriage, namesakes and doubles, represents a parallel 'sacred' history and geography of the subcontinent. Every event, social movement, economic reform,

phenomenon of culture, and even onomastics and etymology, finds an echo, it seems, in the fixed and timeless dimension where the saints dwell. The spiritual 'conjuncture' of sainthood keenly responds to wars, palace stratagems and coups d'état, toughening of fiscal policy and populace riots, in its turn influencing society through religious movements of the epoch. The changing socio-political situation every time calls for an urgently necessary type of saint: a stern warrior for faith or a pacifier–philanthropist; a conservative missionary or a *mu'aḥḥid*, indifferent to religious differences; a virtuous ascetic or a *qalandar*, indulging in all sorts of vices; an enlightened preceptor of the elite or an illiterate leader of the lower classes.

Although the rituals and ceremonies of the veneration of the South Asian *awliyā* vary even within the limits of settlement of a single ethnic and linguistic group, their essence in the majority of cases is the same, and it is bound up either with curative magic or with an aspect of fertility. In other words the overwhelming majority of pilgrims performing *ziyārat* of a saint's tomb seeks recovery from an illness or increase in progeny. Only a negligible minority is preoccupied with pious, spiritual objects as such.

The cult of saints is to a great extent determined by the legends, cyclically evolved around *mazārs*, *dargāhs* and other places of burial. Among them an important role is played by cultic legends, providing the motivation for some ceremony or ritual. Even in the case of cultic myths of greater antiquity, in the veneration of the South Asian saints there exists not a single ritual act which does not have an explicit or implicit basis in the form of legend about the origin of this act. The myth included in the ritual functions as a substantial element of the ritual, without which the latter is not effectual. Such, in particular, are the universal legends bound up with the threshold of tombs and with its kissing (*āstānbosī)*, with sweeping of dust *(kh̲āk)* or circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of tombs, which legitimatize and sanctify the corresponding religious concepts and ritual-magical acts.

Pseudo-historical tradition about Ghazi Miyan's martial feats motivates the ritual of the veneration of his banner, and apocrypha the ceremonies of *Zŏhra-melā*; legendary episodes of Baba Farid's life explain the ritual of getting over the *Bihishti Darwāza* and distribution of *jillā* in Pakpattan; from popular legends about the fiery dancer Lal Shahbaz Qalandar came into being the ritual dance *dhammal* in Sehwan; without the folkloric ballads about Shah Husain and Madho's love there could not have been the religious festival *melā-i chirāghān* in Lahore, the number of examples can be infinitely multiplied.

An equally important role in the cult of saints is played by etiological legends, explaining the origin of some phenomenon of nature or social life, of toponyms and anthroponyms. Strictly speaking, even the cultic legends accomplish an explanatory function; however, the sphere of etiological legends is much narrower and boils down to the explanation of something existing in reality. Such are, in particular, the numerous legends about the origins of water springs, the appearance of which was ascribed to saints' miracles (for example the spring in Hasan Abdal or the sulphuric springs in Lakhi). Similar legends explain the nicknames of, for example, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar: *Kākī*; Shaikh Farid: *Ganj-i shakar*; Pir Badr: *Badarrao*; Salar Mas'ud: *Bāle Pīr*; Shah Madar: *Zinda*. Typical etiological legends are the miracles of the Makhdum Nuh who had supposedly shifted the mosque in Thatta from its original location, of Mangho Pir, who brought crocodiles to Sind, and of Shams Tabrezi, who changed the climate of Multan. Sources of the names of localities, hills, rivers and towns of the subcontinent also have their roots in etymological legends bound up with the cult of saints.

The cult of saints, which originated in the medieval period and has happily survived till our times, is a special phenomenon in the spiritual heritage of the South Asian countries. Its peculiarity is determined, first, by its striking vitality and capacity to withstand historical changes, social cataclysms and new geopolitical realities. Second, the cult of saints is one of the few extant testimonies of the original 'composite culture' of the subcontinent; it continues to unite people belonging to different ethnic and religious communities, bringing together devotees and pilgrims, disregarding the barriers, including those of the state. Third, the cult of saints is a universal and all-pervading phenomenon, encompassing the diverse spheres of life of the subcontinent and is not confined to the field of religion. In it, as in a drop of water, are reflected the mentality, group psychology and self-consciousness of the South Asian Muslim which in aggregate forms the 'national character'.

Correspondingly, even the hagiographic literature indirectly, but nevertheless integrally and graphically, reflects the picture of the medieval life of the subcontinent. The present book is based on the most widely-known works of medieval Muslim hagiography: Amir Hasan Sijzi's *The Morals for the Heart* (*Fawā'id al-fu'ād*), Amir Khurd's *The Lives of the Saints* (*Siyar al-awliyā*), Hamid Qalandar's *The Best of the Assemblies* (*Khair al-majālis*), Dara Shikoh's *The Notebook of the Saints* (*Safīnat al-awliyā)*, Jamali Kanboh's *The Biographies of the Gnostics* (*Siyar al-'ārifīn)*, and others written in

Persian between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Western scholars, let alone their Indian and Pakistani colleagues, have studied these works for a considerable period of time.

The cult of saints originated in the lap of popular religion, which is customarily referred to as syncretic. At the same time many rituals of the veneration of saints and their tombs are, as I have sought to show, 'the facts with twin motivation', i.e. mutual identification of typologically similar concepts, in no way genetically inter-connected, as were, for example, the Muslim *ziyārat* of the saints' tombs and pilgrimage to a Hindu *tirtha*. The fact of direct influence has to be determined cautiously each time, since the basic rituals of *ziyārat* came to South Asia in the form which they assumed in the primordial lands of Islam.

Nevertheless, the cult of saints, undoubtedly, determines the specific character of the South Asian 'popular' Islam of the lower strata of society and its potential for synthesis, because the essence of synthesis consists exactly in the reduction of values, traditions and tendencies, genetically having little in common with each other, to a common denominator. It has only to be remembered that this inclination has not eroded the ideological boundaries of 'popular' Islam. In fact, it remained just the same Islam with its 'five pillars', and with the indisputable authority of the Prophet, Qur'ān and Sunna, only somewhat more picturesque, whimsical and mild than in other regions of the Muslim world.

As with many other 'exotic' and 'mysterious' phenomena of Eastern culture, the cult of saints and their tombs has long since excited the imagination of European artists. A famous example is the German film *The Indian Tomb* (*Das Indische Grabmal*, 1921) starring a famous hero, Konrad Veidt, and a famous beauty, Lia de Putti. It was a mystical melodrama, which everyone in post-war Moscow seemed to see. The tomb, from which the name of the film was derived, was an exceptionally sinister place where people were killed and bricked up alive as in a Gothic burial vault. In many ways the film was typical of the work of the director, Fritz Lang, one of the creators of German Expressionism in motion pictures.

Gloomy Indian tombs flashed from time to time on the pages of books of well-known writers. Characters in the novels and short stories of, for example, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, or Agatha Christie have staked their lives in the search for treasures in Indian mausoleums. In British India, a visit to the tombs became for Europeans as nerve-tickling an entertainment as a tiger hunt or

elephant ride. It exasperated the better representatives of colonial administration, particularly, William Sleeman, who wrote:

> I would like to express my humble protest against those quadrilles and picnics which are arranged for European ladies and gentlemen in this royal mausoleum [Taj Mahal – A. S.]. Banquets and dances are welcome at their time, but are depressingly out of place under the canopy of a tomb.
> (Sleeman 1971: 197)

It is obvious that Western literature and cinema, talking of the secrets and horrors of Indian tombs, could have implied anything but a Muslim *mazār* or *dargāh*, which have nothing sinister in their atmosphere. The spectrum of emotions accompanying *ziyārat* and ‘*urs* fluctuates between reverential tender emotions and orgiastic uproar, but in any case there is no place in it for terror and crime. Generally speaking, strange as it may seem to us, the tomb of a South Asian saint is a crowded, noisy, even lively place, and its main treasure – dust (*kh̲āk*) – does not have any value in the eyes of treasure-hunters. In other words, the ‘Indian tomb’, as reflected in the mirror of the Western art, has turned out to be yet another error of interpretation of the exotic, akin to Europeans’ distorted prevailing notions about ‘Indian eroticism’, ‘Indian non-violence’ or ‘Indian poverty’.

I have written about the most venerated saints of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, who lived in a historical period when the main *ṭarīqas* were being formed and the cult of *awliyā* was taking shape on the territory of the subcontinent. This, however, does not mean that later on the corps of saints stopped growing. Thus, the epoch of the Great Mughals brought to the foreground other fraternities (Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya) and another type of the saint – puritan and egalitarian or champion of ethnic independence, like Shah Inayat of Jhok or Bayazid Ansari (Pir-i Raushan). The base of the *awliyā*’s pyramid continued to gain in breadth even in our century: new forces were recruited to this ‘celestial army’, amongst whom there was Mihr ‘Ali Shah, the saint of Golra Sharif.

It is possible that with passage of time some of our contemporaries will also be canonized, because faith in *karāmāt* and the inscrutability of divine providence, revealing *baraka* in new generations of people, is still alive amongst Muslims of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. That is exactly why rose petals on the brocade covers of *mazārs* do not fade.

NOTES

1 THE INDIAN TOMB

1 It is possible that the notion about dust (*k̲h̲āk)* as the main sacred thing of the tombs goes back to 'primordial dust' (*al-habā'*), the element of initial creation. Ibn 'Arabi used this term as a synonym for the term *hayūlā*, 'the dark substance, which filled the emptiness in which Allah revealed the images of the universe' (Knysh 1995: 234). Miraculous properties were ascribed to the dust from saints' tombs, as a result of which, with the passage of time, it started being used in magical and occult rituals and also in alchemist practice. Compare the inscription on the tomb of Miyan Mir in Lahore:

> *ki k̲h̲āk-i darash rashk-i iksīr shud*
> The dust of whose portals is envied by the stone of alchemist
> (Goulding 1925: 67)

2 The word *zindīq*, often translated as 'heretic', in Muslim literature basically denoted 'dualists' – Manicheans, Mazdakites, etc. Wide usage of this term has a political rather than a religious connotation. Those who posed a threat to state power were declared to be *zindīqs*, although in the process they were formally accused of religious delusion. *Faqīhs* equated 'heresy' (*zandaqa*) with defamation of the Prophet, which attracted capital punishment.

3 A special and important group consists of the saints, whose *wilāyat* was initially established within the limits of a particular *silsila* or *ṭarīqa*. *Shaik̲h̲s'* lives were included in collections (*tad̲h̲kira*, *ṭabaqāt al-awliyā*) or other hagiographic literature of the *ṭarīqa*, thereby undergoing a peculiar 'internal canonization'.

4 Veneration of the imprint of a saint (deity or religious preceptor's) foot or palm is typical for all South Asian religions. Thus, for example, the depression on Adam's peak (Sri Lanka) was venerated by Muslims as the footprint of Prophet Adam (*Qadam*-i *Bābā*) and by Hindus and Buddhists as the footsteps of, respectively, Shiva and Buddha. In Hardwar, a town holy for Hindus, one of the most venerable sacred objects is the rock with a dent, which is considered to be the footprint of Hari (Vishnu). In the mountainous regions of Punjab Sikhs venerate imprints of Guru Nanak's palm (*Panja Sāheb*).

5 The profusion of relics in Indian Islam is to a great extent explained by the developed pre-Islamic cult of relics, particularly Buddhist ones, with which Islam had to compete. The cult of *stūpa* as that of a tomb or monument, or veneration of relics like Buddha's tooth had their analogies in the cult of tombs and relics among Muslims. Goldziher observes that Buddhist relics could directly turn into Shi'a relics (Goldziher 1967–71, 2: 93).

6 The post of *Shaikh ul-Islām* in the Delhi Sultanate was not permanent, as was, let us say, the post of *ṣadr as-ṣudūr*, supervising *awqāf* property and charity. The title *Shaikh ul-Islām* was honorary, but carried with it a handsome salary and landed estates. Many Sufis used this title in respect of outstanding members of their fraternity. Thus, in Chishtiyya hagiography Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Baba Farid are called *Shaikh ul-Islām*.

7 Early Sufi authors disassociate themselves from *karāmāt*, although they agree that saints show the capability to work a miracle as a gift of God. Al-Qushayri, author of the treatise *Ar-Risālat al-Qushairiyya*, wrote that even if prophets needed miracles, confirming the legitimacy of their mission, saints on the contrary had to conceal everything which they involuntarily performed (al-Hujwiri 1926: 311).

8 Schimmel makes use of another, more traditional and pleasant-sounding, story of the origin of ritual crocodiles from the flower, which the incensed saint threw in the pond and cursed (Schimmel 1980: 129)

9 Shams Tabrizi is a typical example of an amalgamation of different Muslim saints. Buried in Multan, Pir Shams Tabrizi was most probably an Isma'ili missionary, but the tradition popular in Punjab mixed up his name with the name of the famous Shamsuddin Muhammad Tabrizi, friend and *murshid* of Jalaluddin Rumi. This wandering mystic, whose name Rumi used in his *Dīwān-i Shams Tabrīzī* was killed in 1247 and presumably buried in Konya. But the Indian tradition affirms that he managed to save himself from the hands of the assassins and flee to India.

10 The term *samā'* ('hearing', 'the thing heard') 'specifically refers to sacred and religious music. *Samā'* is found in Indo-Persian texts in the Sufi context, either when the licitness of music is discussed or in writings on the rules of conduct (*ādāb*) for listening to music, or in more descriptive accounts of Sufi musical assemblies, in hagiographical (*tadhkira*) and 'discourse based' (*malfūẓāt*) literature' (Delvoye 1994: 93–4).

11 In the Baluchi and Pashto languages the word *ziyārat* means the saint's tomb proper. The name of the city Ziyarat in Baluchistan is derived from the venerated tomb of saint Baba Kharwari.

12 In Trimingham's words, 'there is an essential distinction between the way in which the genuine Sufi approached a saint's tomb and the practice of the people. The mystic carries out a *ziyāra* for the purpose of *murāqaba* (spiritual communion) with the saint, finding in the material symbol an aid to meditation. But the popular belief is that the saint's soul lingers about his tomb and places (*maqāms*) specially associated with him whilst he was on earth or at which he had manifested himself. At such places his intercession can be sought' (Trimingham 1971: 26).

13 *Murāqaba* ('spiritual communion', 'meditation') is the concentration of thoughts for the purpose of spiritual communion with God, a saint or preceptor; it is a psycho-technical method by means of which a Sufi conceived the image of a saint or his *murshid*. *Murāqaba* could take place both during the lifetime of a saint and after his death; celebrated mystic unions of Jalaluddin Rumi with Shams Tabrizi, of Shaikh Farid with Nizamuddin Awliya, Dara Shikoh with Miyan Mir, Shah Husain with Madho Lal etc., come under the category of *murāqaba*. On a *shaikh*'s death his disciples sought *murāqaba* near his tomb, which facilitated the state of contemplation and meditation.

14 Distribution of consecrated food is an integral element of a wider concept *tabarruk* (from *baraka*), including the distribution of offerings made to a saint among his relatives and descendants and also the passing on of blessings through material objects, consecrated by contact with a saint.

15 Another tomb ascribed to 'Abdul Qadir Jilani happens to be in Kallar Kahar of Punjab. In Qalat a Shi'a missionary of the eleventh century actually bearing this name is buried and in Punjab there is similarly a Turkestani saint of the thirteenth century.

16 *Ibāḥa* (Arabic 'giving freedom, permission') is mentioned in early Sufi texts, in particular, by al-Hujwiri, in respect of the mystics, considering themselves to be free from social and ethical limitations. Amir Khusrow and Barani in their chronicles relate the term *ibāḥatī* to Isma'ilis and 'people of incest'. Therefore, the attempts to trace the etymology of this word to 'spoiled transmission' of the word *bhakti* are erroneous as is also the notion about *ibāḥatī* as an esoteric Hindu sect, in which 'elements of early medieval age tantrism had survived' (Ashrafyan 1963: 133).

17 At the same time the graves of British colonial officials occasionally became objects of ritual veneration. An example is perhaps the grave of John Jacob, who was at the head of British administration in Khangher (now Jacobabad) of Sind in the middle of the last century. The memorial to Jacob in the local Christian cemetery is venerated by the Sindhis as a shrine: they decorate it with flower garlands, and on Thursdays they kindle votive lamps in front of it.

18 Mithankot is a small town on the bank of the Indus, built around the tomb of Khwaja Ghulam Farid (1815–1910), a saint famous for his popular poetry in Siraiki.

19 Compare, for example, the *bait* (couplet) of Abu Sa'id bin Abul Khair Mayhani:

> *Hūsham na muwāsiqān–o khīshān burdand*
> *Īn kajkulāhān-i mūparīshān burdand*
> I lost my reason not due to relatives and supporters,
> Those with cocked hat and dishevelled hair plundered it.
> ('Afifi 1997: 2024)

2 THE HERMIT OF LAHORE

1 The dust, which is a rising point of lights –
the stars are ashamed of the particles of that dust,
The dust by which is covered one who knew the mysteries.
(quot. from Schimmel 1980: 91)

2 Mihr ‘Ali Shah was *jāmi‘ as-salāsil*. His father’s maternal uncle first initiated him into his ancestral Qadiriyya *silsila*. Later, for further spiritual elevation, he sought induction into Chishtiyya Nizamiyya order. Some years later he was admitted to, and permitted to initiate people into, Chishtiyya Sabiriyya (Faḍil Khān 1989: 25).

3 Judging by *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, the question as to who becomes a saint was discussed by the great *Shai<u>kh</u>s* of the Chishtiyya fraternity in connection with the teaching about the covert, latent sainthood, in which the *awliyā* abide till God reveals them to their people. Thus, Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori was asked: ‘How is it that after their death some of the saints are never remembered by name while in the case of others, their posthumous fame spreads to the end of the earth? What causes this disparity in the state of saints?’ Hamid ad-din answered: ‘He who strives to become famous during his lifetime – after he dies his name will be forgotten, while he who conceals his identity during his lifetime – after he dies his name will resound throughout the world’ (Amir Hasan 1992: 82).

4 Tradition ascribes illiteracy to many a saint, including the mystic poets, which is undoubtedly bound up with the anti-intellectualism of popular religion. Typical is the story from Shah ‘Abdul Latif’s life, who in his childhood during his first visit to the school learnt only the first letter of the Arabic alphabet *alif* and refused to learn any more, justifying his refusal by the words: ‘*Alif* – This is Allah, and I need not learn anything else’ (Mayne 1956: 147). This is reminiscent of the Punjabi mystic Bullhe Shah:

‘ilmoñ bas kareñ o yār
ikko alif tere darkār
Let us put a stop to knowledge, o friend,
only one *alif* is required for salvation.
(Tariq Rahman 1995: 23)

5 Complete title of al-Hujwiri’s book is ‘*Kashf al-maḥjūb li-arbāb al-qulūb*’.

6 Through Shaikh al-Khuttali al-Hujwiri’s spiritual genealogy in the fourth generation goes back to Junaid (Junaid – Abu Bakr ash-Shibli – Abul Hasan al-Husri – Abul Fazl al-Khuttali – al-Hujwiri).

7 Abu Hanifa (690–767) – theologian, founder and eponym of Hanafi *ma<u>dh</u>ab*, to which al-Hujwiri belonged.

8 In the original *ḥalwā-yi ṣābūnī*, sweet dish of almonds and honey, prepared with sesame oil, in various colours.

9 *Ahl as-ṣuffa* (‘the people of the veranda’) – Prophet Muhammad’s poor associates, without a home of their own and living under the awning of

a mosque in Medina. Al-Hujwiri and subsequent authors depict them as the earliest Sufis. Certain medieval authors traced the etymology of the word *ṣūfī* to *ṣuffa*. Al-Hujwiri lists various versions of the origin of the word *taṣawwuf*, but does not consider any of them absolutely convincing (al-Hujwiri 1926: 30).

10 Al-Hujwiri's main predecessors are considered to be Abu Nasr as-Sarraj, the author of *Kitāb al-luma'*, 'Abdur Rahman as-Sulami, the author of *Ṭabaqāt as-ṣūfiyya*, and Abul Qasim al-Qushairi, the author of *Ar-Risāla fī 'ilm at-taṣawwuf*.

11 *Ahl-i ḥadīth* – 'People of the tradition', bearers of the traditional ideology of Islam. Among them there were many Muslim scholars or *muḥaddith*, engaged in the collection and critique of *ḥadīths*. In this episode, apparently, the reference is to one of these scholars.

12 An example of this attitude towards the mystics, his contemporaries, is given by Dara Shikoh in *Majma' ul-Baḥrain*: 'The divines of our days invite disciples to a "pure beholding" of God, but none of those disciples ever attains the stage of an *'Ārif*, nor is he benefited by their discourses and, dying on the way of *Sulūk* (journey) and *Ṭarikat* (Path) never reaches God' (Dara Shikuh 1990: 55).

13 Lahawur or Lohawar – the name of Lahore used is Muslim literature, including in al-Biruni's *Kitāb al-Hind*. The word *āwar*, signifying a fort in the language of the Rajputs, forms a part of many South Asian toponyms (compare Peshawar, Kathiawar, Sonawar, etc.). The form 'Lahanur' is also to be found in Amir Khusrow Dehlevi's works. In medieval Rajput sources the city was called Lavkot (Lava's Fort) as Lava, one of Lord Rama's sons, was considered to be the legendary founder of Lahore.

14 Precisely the fact that al-Hujwiri did not have the books from his library at his disposal, in V.Zhukovsky's and R.Nicholson's opinion, accounts for the arbitrariness with which he quotes works of some of his predecessors.

15 Even before its conquest of Lahore by Ghaznavids the teaching of the Sufis were being preached there by a certain Shaikh Muhammad Isma'il al-Bukhari (who died in 1056), whom probably al-Hujwiri did not find alive. The Islamization of Punjabi Hindus is ascribed to the Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, one of Mahmud Ghaznavi's military leaders, whose tomb is to be found in the Old Fort. The name of a caste of Punjabi Muslims – *Sulṭānī* – can be traced back to this soldier-saint.

16 Depiction of similar imaginary meetings of the saints of different epochs was a favourite motif of the Muslim poetry as well as miniature painting (for example the miniature of the seventeenth century from the collection of the state Hermitage, depicting the meeting of the great Chishtiyya *shaikhs* with Abdul Qadir Jilani and Bu 'Ali Qalandar). So that here Iqbal follows a particular tradition.

17 This is proved by yet another passage of the poem *The Secrets of the Self*, where Iqbal eulogizes Miyan Mir, as much 'moderate', conservative and universal as even Data Saheb :

> The holy Sheikh Miyan Mir Wali,
> By the light of whose soul every hidden thing was revealed,

His feet were firmly planted on the path of Mohammed,
He was a flute for the impassioned music of love.
His tomb keeps our city safe from harm
And causes the beams of true religion to shine on us.
Heaven stooped his brow to his threshold.
(Iqbal 1977: 118)

18 Apart from inscriptions of eulogy, addressed to Data Sahib himself, these are typical formulas of Sunni piety:

Abū Bakr ham chū Ka'ba 'Umar dar ṭawāf-i ū
'Uthmān āb-i Zamzam 'Alī ḥajj-i akbar ast
Abu Bakr is like Ka'ba, 'Umar is circumambulating it,
'Uthman is the water of the *Zamzam*, 'Ali is the Great *Ḥajj*.

3 THE OLD MAN OF AJMER

1 Amir Khurd in *Siyar al-awliyā* lists the names of Mu'inuddin Sijzi's predecessors in the *silsila*: Abu Ishaq ash-Shami, Khwaja Abu Ahmad Abdal Chishti, Abu Muhammad Chishti, Khwaja Yusuf Chishti, Khwaja Maudud Chishti, Khwaja Ahmad Chishti, Khwaja Haji Sharif, Khwaja 'Uthman Harwani. With the last named, who was Mu'inuddin's spiritual preceptor, the progress of the *silsila* on the territory of Khurasan comes to an end (Amir Khurd 1978: 94).

2 Mu'izzuddin Ghori is more often referred to in Muslim historical literature as Muhammad Ghori; in Indian literary tradition, particularly in the famous poem *Pṛithvīrāj Raso* by Chand Bardai, he bears the name Shihabuddin.

3 Amir Khurd's assertion that Mu'inuddin spent about twenty years with his preceptor Khwaja 'Uthman Harwani, does not conform to the hagiographic story of his meeting with 'Abdul Qadir Jilani in Baghdad. The latter passed away in 1166 and that is why Mu'inuddin could visit him at quite a young age. The same applies to his meeting with Najibuddin Suhrawardi (who died in 1168).

4 Such is, for example, the hagiographic story of conversion of the Shi'a vicegerent of Sabzwar town Muhammad Yadgar to Sunni Islam. He conducted himself with such animosity towards Sunnis who victimized people only for the fact that they bore the names Abu Bakr, 'Umar or 'Uthman (i.e. the names of the first three Caliphs, not recognised by Shi'a). The effect of only one glance of Khwaja Mu'inuddin was to make him repent of his delusions and became a pious Sunni (Rizvi 1986: 120–1). Amir Khurd narrates another symmetric story of the conversion of orthodox theologian Maulana Ziyauddin Hakim to the path of Sufism. The Khwaja visited the Maulana's *madrasa* in Balkh, where he was implanting anti-Sufi sentiments. The Khwaja invited the Maulana to share a meal with him, during which all of a sudden the profundity of mystic teaching dawned on him. Later Maulana Ziyauddin became the Khwaja's disciple and his *k͟halīfa* in Balkh (Amir Khurd 1978: 209).

5 Abu'l Fazl, in particular, writes: 'In the same year that Mu'izu'd-Din

Sam seized Delhi, he (the Khwaja) arrived in that city and, in order to lead a life of seclusion, he withdrew to Ajmer' (Abu'l Fazl 1978: 178).

6 According to *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, Shaikh Husain Zanjani died earlier than al-Hujwiri, in which case Khwaja Mu'inuddin could not have met him in Lahore. 'Husayn Zanjani had lived in Lahore for a long time when their common *pir* said to Khwaja 'Ali Hujwiri, 'Go settle in Lahore'. 'Ali Hujwiri protested: 'But Shaykh Husayn Zanjani lives there'. 'Go!' said the *pir*, repeating his injunction. 'Ali Hujwiri dutifully left and proceeded to Lahore. He arrived there in the evening. The next morning he heard them reading the funeral prayer for Shaykh Husayn' (Amir Hasan 1992: 119).

7 Bibi Hafiz Jamal's name is given to the area to the west of Taragarh fortress, where the spring Chashma-i Hafiz Jamal was situated, by the side of which, on emperor Jahangir's orders, in 1614 the country palace Chashma-i nur was erected and a regular park with reservoirs and fountains was laid out. The ambassador Thomas Roe left a detailed description of the palace and the garden (Foster 1965: 123–6).

8 *Muqṭa'* was in the Muslim medieval East the holder of an *iqṭā'*, i.e. a fief, granted by the ruler to a private person on condition of performing a particular, most often, military service. The collection of taxes on the territory of *iqṭā'* was part of his responsibilities. In the Delhi Sultanate *muqṭa'* performed the role of administrative vicegerents of conquered territories.

9 Apparently, in view of the hazard of the journey to Ajmer, Mu'inuddin's great successors Nizamuddin Awliya and Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli did not perform pilgrimage to his tomb, but limited themselves to the *ziyārat* of the tomb of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.

10 The cauldron has not survived, only the chronogram of the date of its installation remains, written by Mir 'Atauddaula Kami Qazwini, one of the poets of Akbar's court:

> The faith-cherished king, enthroned like Jamshid,
> The Khusraw of the age, Muhammad Akbar
> Made, without doubt, for the conquest of Chittor,
> A mortar-brazen-bodied and dragon-faced.
>
> (Tirmizi 1968: 17)

11 A well-known anecdote is peculiar for Aurangzeb's attitude towards music. After he had removed all the musicians from his court, the latter went past the emperor's chambers with a funeral procession. On being questioned whom they were going to bury the musicians replied that music had died and they were going to bury it. 'Fine', replied Aurangzeb, 'bury it deeper, so that no sound is heard from the grave.'

12 Wet-nurses and nannies wielded great influence in the court of the Great Mughals and often donated ritual buildings, the most well-known of which was the mosque of Dai Anga, wet-nurse of Shah Jahan, in Lahore.

4 THE ASCETIC OF PAKPATTAN

1 The dates of life of these 'founders' are not indicative of even the lower time limit of the formation of literary norms in the modern Indian vernacular. In the majority of cases this time limit coincides with the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, i.e. with the period of disintegration of the Great Mughals empire, is accompanied by the final loss of status of Persian language and the giving up of diglossia between Persian and Indian vernaculars.

2 *kāfī* – strophic form with repeated refrain, of lyrical-mystic content; in the area of prevalence of Siraiki, Punjabi and Sindhi languages it was used for rendition during *qawwālī*.

3 He follows Ibn al-'Arabi's example, i.e. his faith and religion are determined by the Sufi teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

4 *Hū* – from the Arabic *huwa* – He; He is; it is used for the invocation of God at the time of *dhikr*. All the verses of Sultan Bahu end with this pious exclamation; it also became a part of his name.

5 Mir Dard poetically explained why there was no difference between the places of worship on the mystical level:

> *Dair thā Ka'ba thā yā but khāna thā*
> *Hum to sab mĕhmān the vān tūhī ṣāḥib-i khāna thā*
> In monastery, at Ka'ba or in temple
> We all are guests; only Thee are the Master of the house.
> (Asad 'Ali 1979: 156)

6 The authorship of apocryphal *malfūẓāt* of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, *Fawā'id as-salākīn*, is ascribed to Shaikh Farid himself. The fantastic legends about Shaikh Farid are collected in the *malfūẓāt* ascribed to him, *Rāḥat al-qulūb*, supposedly compiled by Nizamuddin Awliya. The latter denied his authorship. According to Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli's reliable evidence 'neither S*haikh ul-Islām* Fariduddin nor *Shaikh ul-Islām* Nizamuddin, nor for that matter any of the Chishti saints or preceding *shaikhs* of my *silsila* ever wrote any books' (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 52)

7 The saint's grandfather Qadi Shu'aib was a Muslim judge. His illustrious lineage and relations with the ruling dynasty are most likely just a legend. Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari traces Baba Farid's genealogy in the fifteenth generation to Caliph 'Umar.

8 *Jawāhir-i farīdī*, not a trustworthy source, narrates a typical story how Qarsum Bibi used to leave Farid alone in the forest for a long time, inculcating into him the aptitude for complete solitude and fasting. When after yet another prolonged absence he returned home, his mother started combing his hair. Farid could not control himself and cried out for pain. 'You have wasted your time and have achieved nothing', his mother said when she found him sensitive to pain (Nizami 1955: 24).

9 The following discourse of Baba Farid is quoted by Amir Khurd: 'The dervishes prefer to die of hunger, rather than to borrow for the purpose of satisfying their own desires. Debt and relinquishment of the world

are two opposite poles and they cannot be brought together' (Amir Khurd 1978: 66).

10 'Shaykh Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr – may God have mercy upon him – use to say: "Whatever I have been told about prayers of the Prophet Muhammad – peace and blessings be upon him – I have observed . . . When I heard that the Prophet – peace and blessings be upon him – once performed the inverted prayer (*namaz-i ma'kus*), I went and, tying a rope around my feet, suspended myself upside down inside a well and performed my prayers in this posture" ' (Amir Hasan 1992: 86–7).

11 These regalia were passed on from Shaikh Farid to Nizamuddin Awliya, and from him to Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli. The latter did not consider any of his *khalīfas* to be capable of controlling the entire fraternity in a centralized manner and stipulated in his will that the regalia of the *shaikhs* should be buried together with him.

12 The attitude to Maulana Nur-i Turk was always contradictory: in *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* by Minhaj as-Siraj Juzjani, the authoritative medieval historian, he was called the leader of heretics (the *Mulāḥid*). Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya, on the contrary, praised him and said that he was more pure than the rainwater (Amir Hasan 1992: 301–32).

13 By a strange coincidence fate brought Baba Farid together with yet another famous medieval insurgent Sidi Maula (Sayyidi Muwallih), belonging to the sect of wandering mystics, the *Muwallihs*. He was for some time a disciple of the saint in Ajodhan, and having disregarded his warning about the peril of participation in political intrigues, he turned out to be involved in the conspiracy of the old Turkish aristocracy, which was dissatisfied with the accession of the Afghan clan of Khalji to power. In 1290 the conspiracy was unveiled, Sidi Maula was accused of encouraging an attempt upon the life of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji and was publicly executed. The Muslim historians interpreted the subsequent hurricane and the famine, which broke out after his execution, as a proof of his innocence.

14 Baba Farid intended on a number of occasions to go for *Ḥajj*, but having recollected that his *murshid* Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki had never been to Mecca, he out of humility decided to abandon his plans (Amir Khurd 1978: 134).

15 Conversion of Hindus to Islam was not the main task of the Chishtiyya s*ilsila*, and that is why the hagiographic literature of this fraternity does not highlight the proselytizing practice of their *awliyā*. However, the folklore of many South Asian tribes and ethnic groups has preserved traditions about their conversion to Islam by some Muslim mystic or saint. The Punjab Gazetteer of 1913 recorded that the Siyals, the Khokars and the Dhudis, descendants of Rajput clans, as also the Tobes and the Jalhoras (castes of fishermen), claimed that they adopted Islam under the influence of Baba Farid's preaching.

16 Nizamuddin Awliya recollected: 'Once when I was present in the assembly of Shaykh al-Islam Farid ad-din, I saw a curl fall from his beard and alight on his chest. I said: "If the Shaykh permits, I have a request to make". "What is it?" he asked. "A curl has fallen from your beard," I replied. "If you permit, I want to keep it as an amulet." "It is yours," he replied. . . . From that time on whoever experienced grief or

despair and would come to me asking for an amulet, I would give them that curl. They would take it with them and keep it till they were relieved of their affliction' (Amir Hasan 1992: 153).

17 Hamid Qalandar cites in *Khair al-majālis* the only instance when Baba Farid lost his patience. A persistent dervish asked him for an old comb promising instead 'a lot of blessings'. 'Get out', blew up Shaikh Farid in anger, considering the request to be foolish, 'otherwise I will throw you and your blessings in the river'. On the way back from the cloister the dervish fell in the Sutlej and drowned (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 202).

18 According to Amir Khurd, Farid had seven *khalīfas*: Najibuddin Mutawakkil (the saint's own brother), Badruddin Ishaq (the saint's son-in-law), Jamaluddin Hansawi, Nizamuddin Awliya, Shaikh 'Arif, Shaikh 'Ala'uddin 'Ali Sabir (founder of a derivative branch of the fraternity, Sabiriyya) and Fakhruddin Safahani. Early hagiographic sources give quite scanty information about Shaikh 'Arif and 'Ali Sabir and it is reasonable to assume that they were not close to the saint in his lifetime. Fakhruddin Safahani, who lived in Bilgram and had never been to Ajodhan, was given the *khilāfat-nāma in absentia* on Nizamuddin Awliya's request.

19 According to Jami in *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, Nizamuddin took the final decision to go to Ajodhan under the impression of the *āyat* of Qur'ān heard by him at the time of prayers: 'Has not the time come for those who have come to believe, so that their hearts submit while praying to Allah' (57: 16).

20 The only instance when Nizamuddin provoked displeasure of his *murshid* is linked with the arrogance of learning. Shaikh Farid was studying with him '*Awārif al-ma'ārif* in quite an imperfect manuscript, correcting the copyist's mistakes in the course of reading. Nizamuddin, tired of the breaks which were interrupting the studies, reminded his preceptor that a better and corrected copy was available with Shaikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil and that was the one which should have been used. The saint was indignant and sent him away with the words 'Has the dervish *no* power to correct a defective manuscript?' (Amir Hasan 1992: 109). In the seemingly inoffensive remark of the disciple the saint had discerned a lack of humility and the impatience of presumption.

21 The example of speculative inclusion of Baba Farid in the history of the Punjabi literature is the poem *'Saif ul-mulūk'* by Miyan Muhammad (1855) in Punjabi, where the author wrote:

> Many are the wise poets of the land of the Panjab,
> Whose *kāfīs*, *bārāṇ-māhs*, or *baits* and *dohṛās* shine.
> First stands Shaikh Farīd, the saintly Shakarganj,
> Each word he uttered guides us on the righteous way.
> Then came Sulṭān Bāhū, a special man of God,
> Whose holy *dohṛās* are so glorious in both worlds,
> Bullhe Shāh swam in the sea of Unity,
> His *kāfīs* from the heart remove all unbelief.
> (Shackle 1993: 289)

5 THE PEACEMAKER OF DEHLI

1 There is no paucity of hagiographic literature on Nizamuddin Awliya. Among them (apart from the books of authors already referred to above) are ‘Ali Jandar’s *Durar-i Niẓāmī* (Ms. in Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad), Muhammad Jamal Qiwam’s *Qiwām al-‘aqā’id* (Ms. in the library of Osmania University, Hyderabad), Gesudaraz’s son Sayyid Muhammad Husaini’s *Jawāmi‘ al-kalim* (published in 1937) and *Afżal al-fawā’id*, ascribed to Amir Khusrow. Apart from that the authorship of the afore-mentioned fabricated *malfūẓāt*, *Rāḥat al-qulūb* and *Rāḥat al-muḥibbīn* was ascribed to Nizamuddin Awliya himself, which was, however, strenuously denied by him.

2 Ghiyathpur (or Moghulpur), a village in the suburbs of the so-called ‘New city’ (Kilugarhi), where the capital of Sultan Balban and his son Kaiqubad was located in the thirteenth century. The ‘New city’ was situated to the northwest of the ‘Old city’ (Mehrauli) of the Ghorids.

3 The opposition *lāzimī-muta‘addī* has been borrowed by the mystical literature from grammar, where the former term signifies the intransitive verb (action limited to the subject), and the latter, the transitive (action directed towards the object). It is exactly this meaning of grammatical transitiveness, which is applied by Nizamuddin Awliya to religious service (Nizami 1992: 51).

4 In explanation of the idea of worldly life without involvement with and attachment to worldly matters Nizamuddin narrated the parable about a saint, who had sent his wife to take food to a dervish, living on the other bank of the river. There was no ford in the river, and the saint told his wife to ask the water to part out of respect to her husband, who had never slept with a woman. The wife, who had given birth to the saint’s children, was extremely amazed at such a direction, but obeyed, and the river parted before her. Having fed the dervish, the woman asked how she should now return. The dervish repeated her husband’s instructions: she should tell the river to give way to her for the sake of a hermit who had not taken food for thirty years. The bewildered woman, before whose eyes the dervish had had his meals, carried out the order and reached home safely, where she demanded an explanation from her husband. The saint said: ‘I never slept with you to satisfy the passion of my lower self. I slept with you only to provide you what was your due. In reality, I never slept with you, and similarly, that other man never ate for thirty years to satisfy his appetite or to fill his stomach. He ate only to have the strength to do God’s will’ (Amir Hasan 1992: 152).

5 The earliest historical work, ascribing the saying to Nizamuddin Awliya is ‘*Tārīkhi Mubārak Shāhī*’ of ‘Abdullah Sirhindi (end of the fourteenth century). In the sixteenth century Bada’uni, in *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, explains the origin of this saying: ‘Among the inhabitants of India the opinion is widespread, that Sultan Ghiyathuddin Tughluq, because of the enmity harboured by him towards the *Sulṭān al-mashā’ikh*, sent him a notification while on the way to Lakhnauti: “After my return to Delhi either the Shaikh will remain there or myself.” The Shaikh replied: “It is still far away to Delhi” (Bada’uni 1973, 2: 301).

6 In the last year of ‘Ala’uddin’s rule, the military leader Malik Na’ib, by resorting to intrigue, saw to it that the heir apparent, Khizr Khan, was deprived of the rights of succession to the throne. After his father’s death Khizr Khan was blinded, and the other claimant, Qutbuddin Mubarak, miraculously escaped death. When he ascended to the throne under the name of Mubarak Shah, he put to death Khizr Khan and the rest of his brothers. The fate of the unfortunate prince found its reverberation in Amir Khusrow’s poem *Duwal Rānī-o Khiẓr Khān*.

7 Amir Khusrow’s poem *Nuh sipihr* (Nine heavenly spheres) served as a proof of the fact that the ban imposed by Mubarak Shah Khalji was not taken into consideration. In spite of the fact that it was written on this Sultan’s order, the poet included in it glorification (*madḥ)* of his spiritual preceptor, without any hesitation.

8 Barani wrote about *dīnpanāhī*: ‘Even if the ruler were to perform every day a thousand *rak‘a* of prayer, keep fast all his life, do nothing prohibited, and spend all his treasury for the sake of God, and yet *not* practice *dīnpanāhī*, *not* exert his strength in the extirpation, lowering, curbing and debasing of the enemies of God and His Prophet, *not* seek to honour the orders of the Divine law and *not* show in his realms the splendour of ordering the good and prohibiting the forbidden . . . then his place would be nowhere but in Hell’ (Schimmel 1980: 13–4).

9 *Mashāriq al-anwār* (thirteenth century) represents a popularization of the so-called *Ṣaḥīḥain*, i.e. of the two collections of authentic *ḥadīths*, known as *as-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhari and *al-Jāmi‘ as-ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim (both of the ninth century). The study of *Mashāriq al-anwār*, comprizing 2,253 *ḥadīths*, was a compulsory part of the syllabuses of South Asian *madrasas* up to the end of the fourteenth century. The text of *Mashāriq al-anwār* called into being numerous commentaries. Later, Tabrizi’s *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ* became the basic collection in the field of science of *ḥadīth*.

10 The origin of the nickname *Awliyā* is not quite clear to modern researchers. Amir Hasan on several occasions calls the Shaikh ‘Sultan of saints’ (*sulṭān al-awliyā*), although he was more often referred to as the Sultan of Shaikhs (*sulṭān al-mashā’ikh*). It is possible that later the word *sulṭān* was dropped and *Awliyā* got appended to the saint’s name. Many centuries after the saint’s death, Shah Waliullah’s son, the theologian Shah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, explained this and similar nicknames by the fact that the use of plural forms for an individual is an indication of accentuation of some quality, i.e. it plays an emphasizing role.

11 While his mother was ailing, Nizamuddin endeavoured to help her by performing *ziyārat*: ‘When my mother – may she be blessed – fell ill, she asked me several times to visit the tomb of a certain martyr or a certain saint. I would obey her command, and when I returned home, she would say: ‘My illness is better, my affliction has eased” (Amir Hasan 1992: 149). It is known that Nizamuddin performed *ziyārat* of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki’s tomb several times and visited the tomb of Shaikh Farid in Ajodhan seven times.

12 Thus Amir Hasan set free his slave Malih by name ‘in gratitude for the privilege of discipleship’. Later Malih became a *murīd* of the Shaikh. Another instance of liberation from slavery is also connected with Amir

Hasan, who, while serving in Deogiri, ransomed a Hindu girl, paying five *tankā* to her owner, and returned her to her parents, thereby evoking praise and blessing of the Shaikh.

13 In other South Asian fraternities, for example among Suhrawardis, visitors were admitted to the *k͟hānqāh* only during particular hours: between midday (*ẓŏhr*) and pre-evening (*ʻaṣr*) obligatory prayers.

14 Amir Khusrow, at times without sufficient grounds for the same, is traditionally considered to be the founder of *qawwālī*, wedding songs *bābal morā* (having an obvious folk origin) and lyrical poetry in Hindustani (Urdu). The invention of *sitār* and musical style *k͟hayāl* is also attributed to him.

15 From previous works of this type Amir Hasan, probably, knew Muhammad bin Munawwar's *Asrār-i tawḥīd* (discourses of Abu Sa'id bin Abul Khair, 1178), *Malfūẓāt-i Najmuddīn Kubrā*' (1221) and *Fīhi mā fīhi* (collection of Jalauddin Rumi's discourses, compiled after his death).

16 From this quotation it follows that Nasiruddin had a nostalgic feeling for the recent times of his predecessor as for the 'golden age' of Sufism, and perceived the present as decline. Whereas objectively he had the greatest influence and power compared to all the great *shaik͟hs* of the Chishtiyya. The first of the Chishtis to accept the post of *shaik͟h ul-Islām*, he saw to it that some *ʻulamā* and *ṣūfīs* were allowed to remain in Delhi after the forced resettlement of its population in the new capital in the Deccan. It is considered that, thanks to Nasiruddin, the mystic and intellectual tradition in Delhi was not interrupted. Besides that, historians ascribed to him a prominent role in the enthronement of Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351–88), who revived all the former privileges of the fraternity. In other words, Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli saved his order at the cost of violation of the precepts of its founders: he accepted *shughl* and interfered in the affairs of state.

6 THE SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGN OF MULTAN

1 In addition less well-known disciples of the founder of the Suhrawardiyya order were also preaching in South Asia: Maulana Majuddin Hajji, Shah Turkman Sahib and Ziauddin Rumi. Sultan Mubarak Shah Khalji endeavoured to exploit the latter in his struggle against Nizamuddin Awliya. Abu Hafs 'Umar's disciple was also the saint of Bengal Jalaluddin Tabrizi, who started his discipleship under Abu Sayyid Tabrizi, but after the latter's death, shifted to Baghdad, where he became one of the most ardent *murīds* of Shihabuddin Abu Hafs.

2 According to *Surūr as-ṣudūr*, at the *maẓhar* Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori proclaimed: '"As treasure and serpent are associated in form, they should be linked in reality . . . Then wealth is a serpent and one who stored wealth in fact rears a serpent." Baha'uddin Zakariya replied: "Although wealth is a serpent, someone who has learnt the incantation to overcome the venom, need not have any fear from the serpent." Hamiduddin retorted that one should not rely upon charms on the occasions when there is threat to life (meaning spiritual

life). Here his opponent lost patience and declared, that perhaps wealth was really dangerous for spiritually imperfect Chishtis, but the strength of the Suhrawardis made them not accessible to temptation and bewitchment with the evil eye. Hamiduddin finished the discussion, telling that Suhrawardis in their spiritual development "were not higher than Prophet Muhammad, who had often remarked that his poverty was his pride". Shaikh Baha'u'd-Din Zakariyya Suhrawardi was unable to reply' (Rizvi 1986: 128–9).

3 It is true that Nizamuddin Awliya did not encourage his disciples to perform *sajda*, but nor did he forbid it. 'As to the *sajda*, in ancient communities the practice was recommended in the same manner as subjects prostrating themselves before rulers, or pupils before their teachers. Religious communities performed *sajda* before their Prophets. In the days of the Prophet Muhammad, *sajda* was halted. Its obligatory character disappeared but its recommendatory character remained . . . Although *sajda* is not obligatory it is not illegal. There can be no question of prohibiting what is legally remitted' (Amir Hasan 1992: 328). Nevertheless, Amir Hasan begins each chapter of *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* mentioning performance of *sajda* before the Shaikh.

4 The difference between *khānqāh* and *jamā'at khāna* is notional enough, and often these terms are used as synonyms. K. A. Nizami has written in this connection: 'Though broadly used in the sense of hospices these terms differ in their connotation. The *khānqāh* was a spacious building, which provided separate accommodation for each visitor and inmate. The *jamā'at khānah* was a large room where all the disciples slept, prayed and studied on the floor. The Chishti saints built *jamā'at khānahs*. The Suhrawardis constructed *khānqāhs*. Common people, unable to appreciate the distinction, used the word *khānqāh* even for the Chishti *jamā'at khānahs*, and now the term is used for all places of spiritual activity without distinction' (Nizami 1961: 175).

5 *Juwāliq* – Arabicized plural form from Persian *jūlakh* – 'coarse wool', 'sackcloth'. *Juwāliqs* were considered to be a branch of the Qalandariyya fraternity, and it was founded by Hasan al-Juwaliqi in thirteenth century.

6 Nizamuddin Awliya, who had condemned the snobbery of the Suhrawardis with restraint, cites a story in witness of the Chishti thesis: in each group of ordinary people (*'āmī*) there are chosen ones (*khaṣṣī*). In the course of a journey Baha'uddin Zakariya came across a group of *juwāliqs* disliked by him, in which a particular man stood out as radiance was emanating from him. To Baha'uddin's question, what he was doing among these vagrants, the man replied: 'Zakariya! [I am here] that you know that in the midst of every group of people there is one of God's elect' (Amir Hasan 1992: 84).

7 Nizamuddin Awliya was of the opinion that Shihabuddin Abu Hafs simply did not hear music. He narrates that once Auhad Kirmani was on a visit to Abu Hafs and sought his permission to organize *samā'*. The host gave the necessary instructions and withdrew into a corner, where he got absorbed in *dhikr*. The musicians played and sang the whole night. In the morning the Shaikh could not recollect that he had been a witness to musical audition. In other words he heard music

without listening to it. 'Every time that a musical assembly would gather in his *khanqah* and the participants would recite the Qur'an, Shaykh Shihab ad-din would hear it, but the actual musical performances, with all their attendant commotion, he would not hear. Just imagine how absorbed he was in his spiritual discipline!' (Amir Hasan 1992: 119).

8 It was not clarified in the original Persian text of *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, but Bruce Lawrence in his English translation mentioned the gender of Qadi Hamiduddin's beloved as masculine.

9 Hagiographic literature maintains that Baha'uddin Zakariya's son was kidnapped since he had threatened Hamiduddin Suwali Nagori, for which the latter had cursed him. This is a rare evidence of open hostility between members of two fraternities.

10 Baha'uddin Zakariya and the Qadi of Multan wrote a letter to Iltutmish, in which they suggested that the Sultan's troops should be sent to the city in order to put an end to the Governor's misrule. The letter fell into Qubacha's hands who executed the Qadi, and invited the saint to his palace for an explanation. Shaikh Baha'uddin fearlessly owned authorship of the letter and declared: 'Whatever I have written, I have written because it is true and I have also written it for the sake of Truth (i.e. God). As for you, do what you want. By yourself, what can you do? What rests in your hands?' (Amir Hasan 1992: 219). The Governor had to leave Baha'uddin's deed without consequences, and soon after the saint's efforts were crowned with success, as in 1228 Iltutmish annexed Sind and Multan. Nasiruddin Qubacha, pursued by the Sultan's troops, was drowned in the Indus.

11 Earlier, having conquered Sind, Muhammad bin Qasim had executed the local ruler Dahir and sent two of Dahir's daughters to the Caliph as a gift; out of a feeling of revenge, they had accused the Arab military leader of rape. The Caliph sent an order to Muhammad bin Qasim, according to which he had to be sewn up in the hide of a newly slaughtered cow and sent to Damascus. Muhammad bin Qasim, who was only eighteen years old, did not care to repudiate the slander, obeyed the Caliph's order and after a few days died of suffocation on the way.

12 Prior to the story involving the dancing girl, the *Shaikh ul-Islām* had endeavoured to open the Sultan's eyes to the alleged fact that Jalaluddin Tabrizi cohabited with a Turkish slave boy, and even spied upon him from the roof of the adjacent house. Jalaluddin, having noticed the shadowing, used to make the slave give him a massage in the bed, teasing his persecutor for fun. However, in this case Iltutmish did not allow the matter to be proceeded with any further, having ordered Najmuddin Sughra to leave the saint alone.

13 Jalaluddin Tabrizi served his *murshid* with incomparable self-denial. Thus, Abu Hafs Suhrawardi annually performed *Ḥajj*, and being an elderly person of poor health, found it difficult to prepare his food on the way. Jalaluddin accompanied him everywhere, carrying on his head a small portable stove, on which food remained hot all the time.

14 Fakhruddin 'Iraqi (died in 1289), a Persian mystic poet, author of a poetical *dīwān*, the poem '*Ushshāq-nāma* (Book of the Lovers) and the treatise *Lama'āt* (Flashes of Light), propagated Ibn al-'Arabi's ideas

in his creative writings. After Baha'uddin Zakariya's death he left the subcontinent and lived the life of a wandering dervish: preached in Konya, was the head of a *khānqāh* in Tuqat, subsequently lived in Egypt and Syria. 'Iraqi was buried by the side of Ibn al-'Arabi's tomb in Damascus.

15 This statue, often mentioned in historical and geographical literature, had made Multan a centre of pilgrimage in pre-Islamic epoch. It was broken by Mahmud Ghaznavi's soldiers in the eleventh century and finally destroyed in the course of the capture of Multan by Aurangzeb's troops in the seventeenth century.

7 THE WARRIOR SAINTS

1 Guru Nanak's pilgrimage to Mecca, described in the hagiographic works of the Sikh *janamsākhīs* can, in particular, serve as a proof of this statement. Since access to the sacred city was forbidden for the followers of other religions, and Guru Nanak could hardly be expected to disguise himself as a Muslim, it is obvious that he was taken to be a *mu'aḥḥid* on the basis of his appearance and conduct. After Mecca, Nanak set off to Baghdad in order to visit 'Abdul Qadir Jilani's *dargāh*. Here the Caliph supposedly presented him with a cloak, embroidered with verses of the Qur'an (it has been preserved up to the present day, together with other relics in the *gurdwārā Janamsthān*, at Nanak's birthplace, in the small town of Nankana Sahib). On returning to Punjab, Nanak visited Ajodhan and Multan, where he met Baba Farid's and Baha'uddin Zakariya's descendants (although *janamsākhīs* assert that these were the great saints themselves, in spite of the fact that they had actually died several hundred years back) – all this points to the closeness of his interests to Sufism.

2 *Sipāh Sālār* – military leader, commander, a customary title for Ghaznavids military vicegerents.

3 The first independent ruler of the Muslim Bengal, Sultan Ilyas Shah, who was suffering from leprosy, moved from Pandua to Bahraich in order to be cured in Salar Mas'ud's tomb. His contemporaries considered the 'medical' motivation of the trip to be a pretext, concealing political ambitions, and apprehended him on the grounds that for the same reason Ilyas Shah would have wished to visit the still more curative mausoleum of Nizamuddin Awliya in Delhi.

4 Even the great saint of the sixteenth century, the founder of Qadiriyya fraternity in Punjab, Muhammad Ghawth, whose tomb is in Ucch, was known by the nickname *Bālā Pīr*. In Qannauj (Uttar Pradesh) there is the tomb of yet another *Bālā Pīr*, in which a saint of the sixteenth century, Shaikh Kabir, is buried. These duplicate tombs are an example of the fact that different saints are venerated under the same name or nickname.

5 *Magh* is a tribe of Burmese origin, inhabiting the hill district of Chittagong. The Bengalis and the English called them robbers or pirates as in the Middle Ages they often attacked the Indian ships in the Bay of Bengal and on the territory of Bengal.

6 For detailed description of this rite in nineteenth-century Northern India, see (Meer Hassan Ali 1975: 154–5).

7 The story of the false prophet Muqanna was given a romantic interpretation in Thomas Moore's short story in verse, included in his poem 'Lalla Rukh' (1812–17). Later in the short story 'Hakim from Merv, a Masked Dyer' Borges presented his own, as always, paradoxical, interpretation of Muqanna's story, according to which his mask concealed the face, disfigured by leprosy.

8 The influence of Naths' deified religious preceptor Gorakhnath on Sufi tradition has been most comprehensively reflected in the works of Chishti theologian 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi (died in 1538). His book *Rushd-nāma* (The Book of Right Guidance) consists of *sabads* (*śabd*), hymns and invocations, popular amongst Naths, where their teaching is identified with the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. The yoga practice of Naths is typical for Sabiriyya, a filial branch of the Chishtiyya, founded by 'Ali Sabir (who died in 1291), Baba Farid's *k͟halīfa*. Some wandering dervishes, often *be-shar'*, not connected with any particular *silsila*, identified with Gorakhnath the semi-legendary Baba Ratan of Bhatinda, a senior contemporary of Prophet Muhammad, who supposedly passed on the esoteric teaching of Naths to the Prophet. After that Baba Ratan, this record-holder in longevity, lived another six hundred years in the god-forsaken village of Punjab. According to this incredible and preposterous legend it turns out that the Prophet of Islam, who passed away in 632, was the disciple of a Hindu, who lived not earlier than the eleventh century!

8 THE MENDICANT SAINTS

1 In literary Indo-Persian tradition *qalandars* are called 'perpetually intoxicated' (*damādam mast qalandar*) for they drove the 'intoxication' (*sukr*) trend of Sufism to extremity.

2 Al-Hujwiri cites as an example of *malāmatī*'s typical behaviour an event from Ibrahim b. Adham's life, as narrated by him: 'On one occasion I was in a ship where nobody knew me. I was clad in common clothes and my hair was long, and my guise was such that all the people in the ship mocked and laughed at me. Among them was a buffoon, who was always coming and pulling my hair and tearing it out, and treating me with contumely after the manner of his kind. At that time I felt entirely satisfied, and I rejoiced in my garb. My joy reached its highest pitch one day when the buffoon rose from his place and *super me minxit* [urinated on me]' (al-Hujwiri 1992: 68).

3 The other ancestor of the Qalandariyya movement is considered to be Hasan al-Juwaliqi (died 1322) who established the first cloister (*zāwiya*) of *qalandars* in Egypt.

4 In spite of great loss of blood, Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dihli survived. In accordance with the moral principles of the Chishtis he forgave the *qalandar* who had made the attempt on his life and even paid him twenty *tankās* in compensation for the 'damage', since the clumsy murderer had got wounded with his own knife. At the saint's urgent request Sultan Firoz Shah did not take any measures against Turab, confining himself to his banishment from Delhi.

5 The Hyderis of Khurasan derived from Qutbuddin Hyder, a disciple of the above-mentioned Muhammad b.Yunus as-Sawaji. Ibn Battuta considered Hyderis, Jalalis and the ‘Iraqian Ahmadiyya (Rifa‘iyya) to be related groups.
6 Members of the Turkish fraternity Bektashiyya used to wear on their chest similar stones, called *taslīm-tash* as a token of humility or submission to the will of God.
7 According to Nizamuddin Awliya: ‘During the Mongol onslaught, the infidels of Chinghiz Khan turned toward India. At that time Qutb ud-din counseled his friends, “Flee, for these people will overpower you!” “What are you talking about?” they asked him. “They have brought a dervish along with them,” he explained, “and they have kept him hidden. That dervish is coming (here) now. In a dream I have wrestled with that same dervish, and he threw me to the ground. The truth of the matter is that they also will overpower you, so flee!” Having said this, he himself retired into a cave and did not reappear. And what he had predicted came to pass’ (Amir Hasan 1992: 101).
8 Barani believed that the bloodshed and unlawful execution of Sidi Maula called down divine retribution on Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji. The event was the watershed, and was followed by an unprecedented dust storm and a severe drought and famine throughout his reign.
9 According to the anecdote, narrated in the chronicle of the seventeenth-century *Tārīkh-i Dā’ūdī*, the founder of the empire of the Great Mughals, Babur visited Sikandar Lodi’s court with a shaven head and in the company of *qalandars*. The Sultan of Delhi supposedly recited to the guest a verse of Hafiz, to the effect that a shaven head did not make one a *qalandar*. Babur countered it in verse, that a crown on one’s head had not yet made anybody a true ruler. This legend nevertheless stands testimony to the status held by *qalandars* in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

GLOSSARY

abdāl (pl. of *badal*)	'substitutes', a category in the saints' hierarchy
abrār (pl. of *bārr*)	'the dutiful ones', a category in the saints' hierarchy
advaita vedānta	non-dualistic philosophy as developed in India by Shankara
afrād (pl. of *fard*)	'the troops', saints of lowest rank
'ahd (*'ahd al-yad*)	swearing allegiance to the *murshid* during initiation ceremony
ahiňsā	harmlessness; the Hindu and Jaina concept of not killing any living being
aiwān	arcade, gallery attached to the building
akhlāq	morals, ethics
akhī	'brother', a member of a Turkish trade-guild
akhyār (pl. of *khair*)	'the chosen ones', a category in the saints' hierarchy
'ālim (pl. *'ulamā*)	one trained in the religious sciences
amṛita	the nectar of immortality; the drink of Hindu gods
'ārif	Gnostic, adept given mystical knowledge
'aṣā	a staff
'aṣr	the afternoon prayer
āstān	threshold, entrance to a shrine, abode of a holy man
āstānbosī	'kissing the threshold', paying respects
awliyā (pl. of *walī*)	saints
awqāf (pl. of *waqf*)	pious foundation
awtād (pl. of *watad*)	a certain four saints regarded as mainstays of the faith
āyat	'sign', verse of the Qur'ān
bai'a	a vow of allegiance
baqā	abiding in God

bārahmāsa	poems that deal with the peculiarities of the twelve months as seen through the eyes of a loving woman
baraka	holiness, virtue as inherent spiritual power
bāṭin	interior, hidden knowledge
bē-shar'	outside the religious Law
bid'a	innovation, something added to the Prophet tradition, hence heretical
bhajan	religious songs in the *bhakti* tradition
bhakti	popular mystical current in Hinduism in which the love relation between an adept and God is emphasized
chaddar	a sheet, cloth
chakkināma	'millstone poems', devotional songs in the vernacular using the imagery of grinding flour
char<u>kh</u>ināma	'spinning wheel poems', songs in the vernacular using the imagery of spinning
chillā	forty-days retreat
chillā-i mak'ūs	inverted fast performed upside-down in a dark place
dār al-ḥarb	'territory of war', an area where Muslims are not in power and which must be conquered
darbār	court, reception at court
dargāh	a Sufi convent, shrine or tomb
darwāza	door, entrance
dastār	turban
dharmaśālā	a place of rest for pilgrims
<u>dh</u>ikr	'recollection', a spiritual exercise employed to attain spiritual concentration; rhythmical repetitive invocation of God's names
dīnpanāhī	the protection of faith, a duty of a Muslim ruler
dīwān	collection of poems by one author
Durgāpūjā	an annual festival in honour of the goddess Durgā
fanā	the 'annihilation' of the mystic in God; union with the Absolute
faqīh	one trained in *fiqh*
faqīr (pl. *fuqarā*)	'a poor one', a general term for a dervish
faqr	poverty
farā'iḍ	obligatory religious duties
farmān	decree, edict, a royal order
Fātiḥa	'The Opener', the chapter with which the Qur'ān opens

fatwā	a legal opinion issued by a *muftī*
fiqh	religious law, the juridical system of Islam
fu'ād	heart
futūḥ	unasked gifts and presents to the saints and their hospices
futuwwa	chivalrous qualities of a youth; the term given to certain organizations of artisans; in Sufism an ethical ideal, which places the spiritual welfare of others before that of self
ghaib	hidden, mystery
ghawth	'Helper' (of the Age); the highest rank in hierarchy of saints
ghazal	lyrical poem with monorhyme, often of the Sufi content
ghāzī (pl. *ghuzāt*)	a warrior for faith
ginān	devotional poetry of the Ismā'īlīs
Gurdwārā	temple and shrine of the Sikhs
ḥabs-i dam	regulation of the breath
ḥadīth	tradition going back to the Prophet based in *isnād* or chain of the transmitters
ḥaḍra	'presence', a Sufi gathering for loud *dhikr* and song recitals
Ḥajj	ritual pilgrimage to Mecca
ḥāl (pl. *aḥwāl*)	a transitory spiritual state of rapture, associated with passage along the Sufi Path
ḥaqīqat	'The Reality', one of the stages of the Sufi Path
Ḥaqq	'The Real', Sufi term for God
ḥarām	sacred, forbidden
Ḥayy	the Living
ḥujra	a chamber, cell of a dervish
ḥulūl	indwelling, infusion of God in a creature
Ḥulūlī	a heretical sect
Ibāḥatīya	'the people of incest', used by medieval Muslim writers for the Carmatians or Ismā'īlīs
ifṭār	breaking the fast
iḥyā al-mawāt	reviving the dead; (fig.) bringing waste land into cultivation
ijāza	licence or diploma
ilhām	inspiration of a human soul by universal Spirit
'ilm (pl. *'ulūm*)	knowledge, science of divine things like *'ilm al-hadīth*
Imām	leader in congregational prayer
Imāmbāra	a building in which Shī'a services are held in commemoration of their *Imāms*

īmān	faith, creed
inkār al-kasb	severing the acquisitive bonds
ʻirfān	Gnosis
ʻishā	the evening prayer
ishrāq	illumination
ism	name; *al-ism al-aʻẓam:* 'The greatest Name of God'
isnād	chain of transmitters of a prophetical or mystical tradition
istidrāj	miracle worked by evil powers
ittiḥād	identification of the divine and human natures
jamāʻat khāna	assembly-hall or a Sufi convent
Jāmiʻ	a Friday mosque
jāmiʻ as-salāsil	a Sufi initiated in two or more orders
jhandā	a flag
jubba	a long gown with full sleeves
juwāliq	a mendicant dervish
kāfī	Sindhi and Punjabi lyrical verse form
kāfir	infidel, non-Muslim
kalām	word, speech, poetical work
karāmāt (pl. of *karāma*)	grace, miracle-work of saints
kashf	disclosure, uncovering, taking away of the veil
khalīfa	deputy, the leader of a branch of an order
khalwat	seclusion, retreat
khalwat dar anjuman	solitude in a crowd
khānqāh	a Sufi cloister
khatm al-wilāya	the seal of sanctity
khawāṣṣ	elect, privileged
khilāfat-nāma	a document given by a *shaikh* to prove the authority of his *khalīfa*
khirqa	a patched garment of a dervish
khuṭba	homily delivered at the Friday prayers
khwāja	master, teacher
kufr	infidelity
kulāh	a conical hat worn by dervishes
Kumbhkāmelā (*kumbha*: a water-pot; a sign of Aquarius)	a fair held by Hindus every twelfth year in particular towns (so called because the sun is then in Aquarius)
langar	public kitchen attached to Sufi shrines
maḥbūb	'beloved', part of the title of high ranking Sufis
madhab	Sunni juridical school

majdhūb	an enraptured one
majlis (pl. *majālis*)	gathering, assembly
makhdūm	'one who is served', the hereditary keeper of a shrine
maktūbāt	writings, collection of correspondence
malāmat	blame, censure
malāmatī	one who incurs censure
malfūẓāt	collections of a saint's 'utterances'
manāqib	virtues of saints, hagiographies
maqām	stage or degree on the Sufi Path
maqbara	a tomb, mausoleum
ma'rifat	mystical intuitive knowledge; one of the stage on the Sufi path
mathnawī	poem in rhyming couplets
Maulūd	birthday, especially that of the Prophet or a saint
mazār	'place of visitation', shrine, a tomb of a saint
melā	fair at the tomb of a saint in connection with his '*urs*
miḥrāb	a niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction of prayer
mu'aḥḥid	one who believes in the Unity of God, an Unitarian
muftī	a lawyer authorized to promulgate a *fatwā*
muḥalla	a quarter of a town
mujāhada	'striving' along the mystical Path
mujāwir	an attendant at a mosque or a shrine
mu'jiza	a miracle-work by prophets
mujtahid	the highest authority in jurisprudence
mukāshafa	revelation
mulḥid	heretic
munājāt	meditations
muqīmān	'residents', the inhabitants of a *khānqāh*
murāqaba	spiritual communion with a saint or spiritual guide
muraqqa'a	a patched frock
murīd	a disciple, novice
murshid	Sufi guide or preceptor
muṣāfaḥa	initiation rite of handclasp
musāfirān	'travellers', those Sufis who are not bound to a particular convent or hospice
mushāhada	contemplation
muwallih	a group of *bē-shar'* dervishes
nafs	the lower self, the animal-spirit soul

nafs-i ammāra	unregenerate soul
nafs-i lawwāma	the reproachful soul
nafs-i muṭma'inna	the tranquil soul
naugaza	'nine yards long', legendary saints of huge size
nisba	epithet of origin
nubuwwat	prophetship, prophesy
nujabā' (pl. of *najib*)	'preeminent ones', a saint category
nuqabā' (pl. of *naqib*)	'chiefs', a saint category
Paramātmā	the Supreme Spirit in Hindu religious philosophy
Parameśvara	the Supreme Lord; an epithet of Vishnu
peshtāq	elaborate gateway of a mosque or other public building
pīr	'elder', Sufi preceptor
pradakshiṇya	in Hinduism reverential salutation by circumambulation from left to right so that the right side is towards an object saluted
prasād	in Hinduism the remnants of blessed food presented to a god
qaḍā	divine predestination
Qadam Rasūl	footprint of 'the Prophet's foot' on stone venerated by believers
qadar	fate
qāḍī	judge in *sharī'at* law
qalandar	a wandering dervish
qalb	heart
qawwālī	music recital and itinerant singer and musician
Qayyūm	the Eternal
qibla	the direction a Muslim faces during ritual prayer
qubba	a domed building
quṭb	'axis', 'pole'; the head of the hierarchy of saints
Rāmajanamsthān	the birthplace of God Rāma
raqṣ	dancing
ribāṭ	a religious hostel, hospice
risāla	treatise
riwāq	cloisters around the court
sadaqa	alms, donation
Ṣadr as-ṣudūr	chief judge
ṣaḥw	mystical state of 'sobriety'
sajda	prostration in prayer
sajjāda	a prayer rug

sajjādanishīn	a successor of the founder of an order, the present head of an order
ṣalāt	ritual prayer
sālik	pilgrim on the Path
samāʿ	'audition', musical recital
ṣaum	fasting from daybreak to sunset
ṣaum-i Dāʾūdī	to eat one day and to fast the next one so that the body does not get accustomed to either way
sayyid	descendant of the Prophet, a group highly venerated in India
shadd	girding, a part of initiation ceremony
shahawāt	the thoughts and desires of an ordinary man
Shahāda	the profession of faith
shaikh	'an elder'; the head of religious fraternity
Shaikh ul-Islām	title of honour given by Sufis to the most reputed saints
Shaikh ash-shuyūkh	title given by secular authority to the renowned religious leaders and mystics
sharīʿat	1 Muslim jurisprudence; 2 The stage of the mystic Path
sharīf (pl. *shurafāʾ*)	noble, sacred; one who claims descent from the Prophet
shirk	'associating' someone with God, hence the greatest sin for a Muslim
shuṭṭār (pl. of *shāṭir*)	'couriers'; a category in the saints' hierarchy
silsila	a chain of spiritual descent
silsila al-baraka	chain of benediction
sirr	mystery
ṣubḥ	dawn prayer
Ṣūfī	a Muslim mystic
sukr	mystical state of 'intoxication', opposite to *sahw*
Sunna	tradition of the Prophet
tabarruk	sacred relics; a portion of presents or food presented to a saint and given to his dependants
ṭabaqāt	'categories', biographies
ṭabaqāt al-awliyā	biographies of the saints
tahajjud	the eighth prayer performed at night
tāj	'crown'; a high-crowned hat of a dervish
tanāzul	'an arc of descent' in a Sufi's inner journey
taraqqī	'an arc of ascent'

tarāwiḥ	supererogatory 'prayer of rest'
ṭarīqa	'a way'; the Sufi Path; a mystical system or Sufi school of guidance
taṣawwuf	Islamic mysticism, Sufism
ṭawāf	ritual circumambulation of the Ka'ba or other shrine
tawājud	ecstasy induces by *dhikr*
tawakkul	absolute trust in God
tawḥīd	the unity of God
ta'wīdh	amulet usually prepared in a Sufi centre
tirtha	in Hinduism a shrine or a sacred place of pilgrimage
'Umra	small pilgrimage to Mecca
'urs	'wedding'; the festival commemorating the death of a saint
virāhinī	the loving woman separated from her beloved in Indian devotional poetry
waḥdat al-wujūd	the unity of Being, existential monism
waḥdat ash-shuhūd	the unity of the witness or phenomena
wajd	ecstasy
walāyat	territory of spiritual 'jurisdiction', the area where the power of a certain saint is active
walī (pl. *awliyā*)	a saint
waqf (pl. *awqāf*)	pious foundation
wilāyat	saintship, concept of sanctity
wuḍū'	ritual ablution
zāhid	ascetic; one who practices *zuhd*
ẓāhir	exterior, opposite to *bāṭin*
zandaqa	heresy, atheism
zāwiya	'a corner', a small Sufi centre
zindīq	an atheist, infidel, heretic
ziyārat	'visitation', pilgrimage to shrines
zuhd	world-denial, renunciation

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